

# FOLK ART OF DUGGAR



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# **FOLK ART OF DUGGAR**

**VOL. I**

**ASHOK JERATH**

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**"God warms his hands at  
man's heart when he prays."**

**—JOHN MAXFIELD**

**Dedicated to the folk-artists, who have  
passed down to us a rich legacy of art.**



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## *Preface*

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The fathoms of folk art treasury are scattered in the vast sea of Duggar land. I could only touch its peripheral corners. Folk art is a spontaneous and exuberant expression of the common masses, their instinctive aesthetic approach to life full of spirit and liveliness and, above all, their endless belief in their religion and faith in their deities. They gather to-gether to celebrate their important religious days, eat and dance and thereby give expression to their strong belief in their gods. They also, on such like occasions, collect together to share their joys and sorrows, tears and laughter. Thus the folklore comes into existence.

The whole book is divided into seven chapters, each dealing with a particular aspect of the folk art of the Dogra region. The most conspicuous and exposed artistic taste of the men of the past was to chisel romance on the sand stones. These half-reliefs are scattered throughout the hilly tracts of Duggar but Udhampur district is specially mentioned here for its richness in this sphere of art. Folk paintings during rituals on floors and outer walls for decoration are in no way second to the stone work. In the same way, rich traditional Dogra folk art of terracota, wood work, calligraphy and crochet work is superb in itself. The objects of this art are scattered far and wide throughout the land and several tours to its hill-tracts gave me the impression that I would discover more material when I rally out next time. It is a paradox that the more one drinks the droplets of this knowledge the more one feels thirsty and unsatiated. All the same, every time I found Duggar's folk art flame up into a glorious sunshine.

I am thankful to my friend Indu Bhushan Sharma who travelled with me for miles and miles in the hilly tracts to explore and find out the material for this book. My thanks are also due to Om Goswami who gave me his article on folk-art of Dogras, which whetted my appetite for the knowledge of this art.

My regards are due to Master Sansar Chand Baru whose mature advice, given from time to time, led me to the proper tract. Above all, I cannot forget the inspiration and encouragement I got from the eminent man of modern Dogri literature—Prof. Ram Nath Shashtri, without which I could not have made this meaningful pursuit. My sincere thanks are also due to Shree Surinder Nath Khajuria and Prof. S. N. Vakhlu who with full sincerity helped me in preparing the copies for the manuscript. Here, I remember with gratitude the innumerable folk artists who bequeathed to this land rich treasure and worked for the love of the work and preferred to remain unknown and in oblivion.

—Ashok Jerath

## *Duggar Land*

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In this script the territory covered is purely on cultural basis. Geographically and politically, the old hill-states of Chamba, Kangra and Gurdaspur are away from Basohli, Bhaddu, Jammu, Udhampur, Bandralta and Poonch but culturally they are one. Even Sialkot section cannot be separated from this culturally intact belt.

Traditional twenty-one hill-states possess common legacy of culture and art. Taking Jammu as centre, Reasi, Chouki-choura in the North West, Katra, Ram Nagar, Udhampur and even posts of Bhadharwah and Kishantwarh in North East, stretching upto Chamba and Kangra on the other side of Ravi are some central places of this common culture which flourished almost at the same time.

This book covers much of the work done in the hilly tracts especially in the old states of Bhamag, Chinaini and Udhampur. Spring-stones scattered throughout this belt are almost same in nature and style. However, the folk paintings differ from place to place.

The wall-paintings in the villages of Paltha, Sutah and Nud nearby Samba on Mansar Road, are conspicuous of their peculiar style and designs. The home made improvised colours used, show their own technique.

Folk paintings during the festivals of Diwali, Nag-Panchami, Holi etc. differ from place to place but certainly they carry almost the same nature and cultural outlook.

The embroidered hankies, popularly known as Chamba rumaals, are still in use in Chamba, Kangra and Basohli, of course, in simple form.

In nut-shell we can trace the common culture in the lower ranges of the Himalayas which this book is concerned about.

# 2

## *Duggar Folk Art*

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Folk art is the result of "strong religious faith", love for beauty and lovely imagination, which, no doubt, are found among the tribal people. Folk art can be traced back to the origin of tribes. The unlimited joy which they get after symbolising a tree as a tribal god, a mount as the godly figure fills them with a robust force and a unique vitality. This energy drives them to sing and dance in love and admiration. The people may not lack the sense of beauty yet it is not the pure aesthetic urge that makes them erect the godly images, decorate the village Mandapas with colourful lustrous bunting and paper-work but it is the faith and the exultation of spirit which makes them ardent and which blossoms out, naturally, into things of beauty. They may live in their imaginative world of icons. The tribal open-theatres are captivative and enchanting. The need of the tribal society for joy is immensely satisfied through their symbolised world, which the urbanites are unable to comprehend and commend.

Dogras' temperament and character is the product of two contrary emotions. They are, on the one hand, as hard as history describes them while, on the other hand, their endless faith in deities, the feeling of remorse after killing makes them soft, urbane and this character may make them victim of exploitation. Every Dogra family has its own history of sacrifice and remorse. Almost every one is related to ceremonial sacred places, named as 'Dehries'. The very history of these

sacred places reveals the other side of the vistas. With these 'Dehries' are related the tribal rituals.

## DEITIES

With Dehries are related the icons and religious deities. Hence the craftsmanship starts with faith, not with the aesthetic sense. The godly images are carved out of the rough sand stones. No doubt, the craftsmanship starts with their endless indiscriminatory faith but with the passage of time this leads to fine taste. The stone carvers get training without any proper schooling. Generally a village folk starts the work which, in due course of time, is picked up by his family members-sons, grandsons ; thus a family becomes proficient in chiselling a stone into an imagined figure. They too are supposed to be sacred artisans. Generally the icons are chiselled out of square flat stones of different measurements ; sometimes, in the caves rocky walls are carved into magnificent figures. These figures are very much the production of mythological background the inhabitants possess. To decorate the deities and surroundings leaves, twiners, trees etc. are carved. They have a number of motifs. Legendary figures overwhelm the others. They include Vishnu, Narsingh Avtara, Ganesha, Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Lingam and a number of symbols of Shakti Vaishno, Sukrala, Kali, Chounda (Chamunda), Mamaya (Mahamaya) etc. Equally important are the tribal lady figures called Shilavantian. The tribal greatmen are also carved out of the raw stones. The most glaring example is of Baba Jitto in Kahna Chack. Other important motifs are the symbols of swastika, sun, moon, elephant and the elements of nature like trees, leaves, birds, animals, streams etc.

## NAGAS

The most controversial motif found in innumerable places is the icon of serpent, named as Naga. The coil of serpent is generally carved out of a single flat square sand stone having small measurements. Nagas play a very important role in the tribal rituals. I happen to go to the village of the legendary Dogra Hero Mian Dido. In his time and after him also

the people used to worship a godly figure of coiled snake carved out of square sand-stone of  $3' \times 3'$  in size. Whenever they needed rain, and the farmers wanted water urgently they would gather around the deities ceremonising for days together beating the drums until the sky started pouring water drops. According to the old men of the village Jagti, it never happened that, despite the ceremony, there would not be any rain. But they had to beat the drums regularly so as to awaken the 'Devta'; so it was named as Deaf-god (Boula Devta); it shows their endless faith. In the same way, the old men of Bhadarwah tell that the people, who worship the icons of serpent, get definitely the Darshana of Nagraja after their Jatra to Kaplash Kund—a small mountainous icy lake. Strange enough here worship of 'Guga'—the legendary warrior who won over Nagas—is very conspicuous. The horse rider 'Guga' can be seen throughout the Duggar belt. Many sculptured stones, carved wooden statues show his presence. A beautiful sculptured image of 'Guga' on a horse back can be seen near Tikri, Udhampur.

## SWASTIKA

Next is the symbol of Swastika. It has a mythical importance rather than a social one. It has come down from the old scriptures to the common folk. Strange enough the symbol is not limited to Hindu faith but it has travelled all the way to the other hemisphere. Nazis used it as burning symbol in Europe. Club shaped Swastika is the barn symbol of Pennsylvania Dutch. As a barn symbol, it also occurs in Ohio. In Europe it can be traced back to the Aegean culture of the Island of Crete through a clay vessel (middle minon I. C. 2100 B. C.). Two similar Swastika of designs on sword pommels—one of Mycenae, the other of Bronze age were found near Ilkly in Yorkshire. Its winding band recasts its connection with the ornamental style. The club shaped Swastika was found carved in Celtic rocks.

Swastika by its structure depicts motion—clockwise motion towards progress. It symbolises Ganesha—a mythological god. As such, each part of Swastika gives the caricature of Dev Nagri 'ग' which stands for Ganesha, who is always worshipped

first. It is the symbol of well begun ceremony, prosperity and protection from evil. Almost all the religious ceremonies start with the worship of Swastika. Swastika is to be painted with the help of ring finger, soaked in vermillion and rice grains. The two are the symbols of progress and prosperity. Every ritual or ceremony in Dogra region begins with the painting of Swastika on the wall or on a Chouki. Though it has travelled the width of Western horizon yet the origin, no doubt, is the Eastern hemisphere.

## SUN

The third most important symbol used in folk-art in this belt is burning sun. Almost every civilization in the remote in its historical past worshipped the Sun. Aryans were sun-worshippers. Sun temples were the first worship places. Sun was the supreme God symbolising the energy. Inka and other red Indian civilizations clearly indicated the sun temples. Greeks and Romans worshipped the sun. Apollo is very much prevalent in Greek mythology. The cult of sun was prevalent in Bronze age. The evidences are a number of bronze plates found in Aegean culture of the Eastern Mediterranean Sphere. They are found in the island of Crete and Mycenae.<sup>1</sup> Hindu mythology is rich enough with the Dasha—Disha and movement of sun. It is the sun around which whole universe moves. It is the sun which makes the directions. In olden days four sun temples were erected in India in four directions. Martand—the sun temple of North—and Konark—the sun temple of East—are still mysteries to be solved. Dogras are not exception to it. They are over-whelmed with the power of the sun. In addition to the worship places like Raghunath temple where there are several aspects of the sun—Utarayan, Dakshayan, several small temples also contain images of the sun as God. Folk paintings also depict the sun, the moon and other natural objects.

It is not astonishing then that Dogra folk art is also influenced by this cult. Most of the Rajput clans migrated

1. The study of folklore by August C. Mahr, page 383. On page 388 the same author states that this cult had a universal appeal.

from other parts of the country so as to preserve their existence, claim their origin from Suryavansha of Rama. Generally the sun is taken as a symbol of 'Shourya'. The halo around the head of greatmen is again the symbol of the sun. From these royal families, the sun cult has come down to the common masses. Moreover, the sun is symbolic of hope. The sun comes with new hopes when the day breaks. Hence the worship of the sun-god is obvious. But this symbol is not limited to worship places only. The spring stones so far exposed show the carving of the sun also. In the Niabat of Panchary so many spring stones possess sun carving and half reliefs of sun chiselled out of sand stones. There is an image of sun-god unearthed nearby the hills; it is erected in a temple in Meer (see the illustrations). In Jammu royal palaces a sun figure is carved in a petaloid form on a wooden plank.

Surya is symbolic of Agni—which is inner principle of light—"Effulgent one sending his light to earth, to the sky and the water, and supplying the life energy to plants. Surya is source of life. Thus he becomes the inner principle of light and life.<sup>2</sup>

Why the Surya is in petaloid form, that too in the symbol of a lotus may be that we cannot observe clearly the burning sun. But with its immense heat and energy spread in the form of halo can be observed in lotus itself which blooms after rise of the sun and shrinks with the sun-set. The reason why the sun is carved in the "Baoli" stones may be that after taking bath, the people worship the sun by giving a handful of water as "Surya Arpana". Even a common man is in the habit of giving water to the sun. In contrary to the sun sometimes the moon and the stars are also depicted in the form of icons. The moon can be taken as water—motif as it helps the ocean water

2. "Surya, the Atman within what moves and what stands still"—  
A.C. Bose, The Call of Vedas, page 158.

The union of light and life sums up, in the physical and spiritual sense, the Vedic outlook on the world :

Him who shines crest by crest equally on all Surya, the Lord of what moves and what is still. The Seven Sisters Bays—bear in the car, for (the worlds') well being.

That lustrous eye, God-ordained, arising, May we see a hundred autumns, May we live a hundred autumns (R. VII. 66. 15-16).

to swell and cause tide. Moreover, the characteristic of the moon imparting coolness may be another reason for worshipping its image. The sun also can be taken as water-motif because it also causes rain.

## ELEPHANT

Another important symbol used by the Duggar folk is *elephant*. The significance of elephant is that it can be taken as the symbol of strength and force. Elephant in Rigveda is known as "Mrghastin" (an animal with a hand)<sup>3</sup>—A number of Elephant images in the form of half-reliefs are kept in the Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu.

Acc. 40 is a sand stone of  $1' \times 1.5'$  of measurement which is chiselled into a rough figure of an elephant with a palanquin in which a lady is sitting. Acc No : 63—a square sand stone chiselled into Army Chiefs sitting on a war-elephant crushing the enemy soldiers. The frontal linings are clear and sharp.

Recent additions to Dogra Art Gallery are the carved sand stones of various dimensions, brought from Udhampur by the side of Devika river. The chiselled figures also show the moving elephants. Most of the folk paintings in the ceremonies like Hoyee and paintings on the outer walls of the mud houses show the figures of elephants. The toy elephants, sewn out of rags, decorated well and placed in the "Dryas" during the marriage ceremony, show the very character of elephant being symbol of manly power. Jammu School of Pahari-painting also shows some elephant riders painted in magnificent shining colours. The old scriptures, religious beliefs and the royal lust for power brought the elephant to this hilly tract. From this royal lust it went down to the level of common folk. It is strange enough that most of the icons exposed so far contain the figures of elephant. Elephant, the subject of many icons, is not a strange thing but in the hilly tracts the popularity of an animal which does not exist in the locality is something conspicuous. One can easily conclude that the common folk might

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3. Rigveda 1.64 and 7, 14, 16.

have known the animal from the scriptures but then the image of the elephant ought to have been sacred to the Dogras, but, contrary to it, the icons of elephants so far found only convey its beauty as a carrier for the aristocrats and warriors. They are shown either crushing the enemy soldiers under their feet, carrying the chiefs of army or a palanquin in which is seated a rich damsel peeping through the curtains; these are the subjects of the half reliefs concerning elephant. It is evident from the subject that this mighty animal was very much popular among the Duggar folk; it is also evident that this brute was taken as a symbol of might by the folk-artists.

Indus valley civilization was also familiar with elephant. A seal showing an elephant before a manger unearthed there supports the view. In recent excavations in Diamabad in Ahmadnagar Distt. of Maharashtra four bronze animals were dug out—supposed to be of 1800 B.C. One of them was elephant. In Mahabhatta the expression of great Airavata—the elephant king of Great Indra, was worshipped for rains. It is strange enough that Ganesha—the elephant headed God—is linked with fertility instead of with rains. Nagas, the serpents, were related to fertility, water and rain. But appearance of the word “Naga” in the Sat-Patha Brahaman, representing a huge snake or huge elephant, caused a confusion and many of the traits of Naga, i.e. serpent,—its association with water and rain, as also to symbolical sexual significance were transferred to elephant (The Naga). The most popular breed in womanhood by the vision of a snake in her dream, traceable not only in India but also in different parts of the world with slight variation, was directly transferred to the elephant.<sup>4</sup>

The elephant, according to an old myth, was the brother of sun—“Aditi”; the mother of Aditayas who is believed to be of the later origin than her children, had eight sons. She cherished seven of them ; the eighth, which was a shapeless lump, was thrown away but was afterwards moulded into Vivasyat, the sun ; the pieces of the lump which were cast

away by the divine artisan fell upon the earth and gave origin to the elephant.<sup>5</sup>

In later developments elephants were treated as the symbol of power and force. The great kings always kept elephants in their forces. Dogra rulers used this mighty animal for their luxurious carriage. Raja Hira Singh used elephants for carrying away the lot of stored riches but failed due to its slow speed.<sup>6</sup> In Duggar folk art especially in the spring stones the palanquin carrying elephant is very conspicuous. Such two square sand stones carved with elephants carrying warriors are lying in Dogra Art Gallery.

### OTHER SYMBOLS

Other symbols used in Duggar Folk art are the godly images like Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, Machh-Avtara, Kachh Avtara and Varah Avtara etc. The most significant are the Shakti images along with a number of local gods like Sankri Devta, Sopor Devta, Akharh Devta and Sankhpaul peculiar of Bhamag hilly tracts. These godly images symbolise the mystic powers and goodness. They are worshipped according to their nature and power. Almost every local deity possesses its own legend. Most of the old legends have trickled down from times immemorial to this day orally. The old sayings blended with wonder and mystery become the subject of these legends.

Apart from the godly images, natural elements like plants, birds and animals are personified. Trees like banana, mango, banyan ; weak stems like twimmers, trailers, runners ; flowers like lotus, roses etc. are but a few subjects used as symbols. The thick trunk of banana tree is symbolised as the succulent thigh of the Nayaka, while a mango tree is depicted for masculinity. Twimmers, trailers and runners are the signs of prosperity and flowers indicate the good hopes and happy life.

Animals like fishes, tortoises, crocodiles, mermaids etc. along with serpents and elephants are taken as water motifs.

5. Macheinzie—Indian Myth and Legend, page 32.

6. Namian Baran (Folk Ballads).

Birds like a pair of sparrows, parrots etc. symbolise the material love. Dancing Peacock depicts the intermingling of sorrow and happiness. Cloudy atmosphere with Nayaka standing by the side of mango tree is an acute haunted state of the lady waiting for her companion.

Twinners entwinning the trunks of trees indicate the sexual and physical lust.

Colours too play an important role in the world of symbols. White is the colour of peace, red the colour of excitement and vital life. Black or dark colour is meant for gloom and sorrow. Colours are selected according to the nature of folk art—wall painting, floor painting, calligraphy, crochet work etc., colours are selected according to the nature of the rituals, ceremonies and occasions. They open the vista of intellectual horizon for the common masses.

Pitcher brims encircled by the arms of damsels are symbolic of ladies desirous of physical union. Palanquins are symbolic of union as well as parting. Beauties sitting in the plalanquins are the newly wedded brides.

## 3

*Sculpture Section***THE STONES THAT SING**

Hills are always magnificent and fascinating. They are wrapped in mysteries. The higher one goes the deeper they dwell. Uncountable fathoms of knowledge of art and culture are scattered demanding a serious audience to look at ; highly intellectual approach is needed to probe and above all to analyse the anthropological aspects, an institution needs to be established.

The greatest wonder that a man from the plains can find here is the wonderful cutstones. Stones speak, dance and fascinate the visitors. The dead and useless stones are chiselled artistically to imitate life. Icons with peculiar images, floral designs, mythical matter handled with due acumen by the sculptors in such a magnificent way that the modern sculptors have to bow before them.

To trace back the history and origin of this art, one has to penetrate the psychology of Pahari/Dogra feudal lords. They were famous for their heroic deeds performed while extending the boundaries of their states. They had another quality as well. Though these feudal lords were very tough and hard yet were soft at core and, instinctively, art-lovers. This character trait has been imbibed by the common people also. The modern attractions, cinematography and hubble-bubble of the times could not change the hearts of these art-lovers. Nevertheless, time leaves its impact. Urbanites are more in a race for material progress but the villages still preserve older sentimental and aesthetic values. Crossing the urban belt

ascending towards the hilly track one can easily find the treasure of chiselled stones scattered under the euclyptus, pine ranges, in the 'Choupalas' of the villages, near the religious places and on the spring panels. People, though poor, are yet very rich as far as their decorative instinct is concerned. The houses are thatched with mud, brushed with cowdung and then are decorated with white-mud—'Parola'. The walls are decorated with floral designs, twiners, trailers, the paintings of animals, birds etc. The universal presence of icons is very much significant in these hills.

Two types of sandstones were used in iconography—black and grey. Black sandstones were the product of local sandy rocks while grey sand stones were imported from the other places. The rough sand stones were chiselled first into required square or romboid measurements by the masons. They were carried to a particular place where the stone carvers, sculptors etc. finished them into fine statues, icons, full-phase, half-phase, monolithic statues as required or demanded. Generally, the black sand-stones were used for carving local deities while grey sand stones for carving any other image. The size varied from  $6'' \times 3''$  to  $2' \times 3'$  measurements. Some rare statues are found to be having  $5' \times 3'$  measurements too.

*Spring Stones* : The grey flat sand-stones were often used for sharpening the square images of different nature. Generally  $1' \times 9''$  was the common measurement of the stones used. They were having 4" to 6" thickness. Sometimes even cubes were cemented together. The remote hilly places are rich with bubbling springs decorated with sculptured sand stones but the lining of these images is not very sharp. The springs situated nearer the capitals of different hilly states are much more decorated with fine artistic gestures of the images. Their lining is sharp and wonderful. Thus the 'Badi-Bauli' of Chenaini, a famous hilly capital, is decorated with fine cut images as if the stones have come to life. In the same way 'Paap Nashi' Bauli of Sudh Mahadev, again a frequently visiting place of Chenaini feudal lords and courtiers, is also one of the best and store-houses of superb art pieces. The springs in Shivaliks are named as 'Baoli' or 'Baan'—a peculiar name given in the Dogra belt. In the same way

'Baolies' situated near Basohli, Bhadu, carry fine cut images on the platforms. But as you go higher, quite in isolated places deep into the forests, the more old and preserved sculptures are found on the Baolies, though not so fine.

*Subject Matter* : Subjects of these statues and half-phase stone carvings range from mythology to the local cult. Most of the spring stones contain carved figures of water motifs. Though these water motifs are related to mythology yet their local origin cannot be ignored. Vishnu giving birth to Brahma lying on the Sheshnaga bed sewed by Lakshmi, 'Matsya', Virat Avtara, mermaids, tortoises, multipetaloid sun figures, lotus, moon etc. are the common water motifs used as subject of these statues and carvings. Religious deities like Ganpati Ganesha, Hanumana, Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Sat Narayana etc., natural elements like twimmers, trailers, euclyptus; birds like swan, garud ; animals like elephant, horse etc ; local deities like Vaishno, Chamunda ; coiled snakes, shakti etc. and the indications of prevailing customs like rich beauties travelling in a palanquin, carried by common masses and guarded by horse riders etc. are the elements of the subject. The warrior spirit of the Dogra came on the surface through these carved stones. The images of horse-riders in a dual fighting, elephant riders making elephant violent by use of Ankush and instigating the elephants to crush the enemy soldiers are very much conspicuous among these carvings. The images of yogic tantra can also be seen here and there. Such figures are carved on a sand stone bearing the idea of different directions. These carved stones can be seen on the panels of 'Badi Bauli' of Chenaini. Some abstract figures are also carved here and there which throw some light on the psychology of the stone carvers. In the vicinity of Ramnagar an anecdote is very popular that the masons, on order of a landlord, finished the panels of a water tank and asked the labour charges. The landlord, avoiding the demands, scratched his head and fingered his hand. The masons were very much frustrated. They painted the same gesture of the landlord on the panels of the tank. Some spring stones contain the carvings of celebrations, social gatherings, Rajya Darbar and even the funeral of a great man, though such carvings are very rare.

*Time-factor* : This uncelebrated art is travelling down

unknowingly from time unknown. However, it flourished in the regime of Dogra Kings. Its origin is not traced yet. But it is very much definite that the art of iconography was very much prevalent a hundred years ago. An old crude figured statue of Yakshini having 3'-6" length and 1'-2" breadth lying near a water reservoir in front of Sudhmahadev temple is said to be the oldest statue in the vicinity. The old man of the village match its age with the broken trident of Shiva present in the temple. The iron core left after breakage contains a Brahmi inscription. Brahmi script was prevalent till 12th century A.D. So it can be deduced that it is more than 800 years old. If Yakshini statue is as old as Trident, this can easily be concluded. The old carved spring stones are also found on the panels of springs on the bank of Dudhar Nullah in Udhampur. In Mageni, there are two springs containing crude statues of Yakshas, Yakshanies and horse riders. It is supposed that the old statues and carved figures are not local in their theme. Either they are the figures of Yakshas or Yakshanies or horse riders. However, with a few more subjects added by the experienced acumenship of the sculptors, the more fine cuts, frontal sharp lining with multiferious ideas came into existence with the time. 19th century was the golden period.

*Stone-culture, carvers and sculptors :* How the crude stone came to life? The whole process was complete in three steps. Firstly, the rocks were cut into required measurements, which varied according to the purpose for which they were to be used. Generally for icons, flat stones of even measurement were cut with three dimensions. For statues and all round cut images, long cubic slabs were chiselled out. This was the profession of masons or stone-cutters. They were paid workers. Generally icon carvers were respected much and a high place was given to them in the society. They were having status, equal to that of brahmins. Feudal lords and landlords were having great regard for them. They were generally amateur artisans but in due course of time their followers and family members adopted this profession. These artists were handsomely rewarded after the completion of their job. The icons and images thus carved were subject to the final finishing touch after being examined by the landlords.

Sometimes pandits and scholars were called to see the images. Especially godly images were thoroughly examined and matched with the description given in the scriptures. However, the images depicting the local culture, customs etc. were the creation of the sculptors and artisans. In due course of the time these artists were deprived of the encouragement they deserved and with the end of hierarchy, they could not get the appreciation of art-lovers under whose patronage they worked. Thus slowly and steadily they shifted to the towns where they adopted other professions especially construction of building and architecture.

*Installation and Ceremonies* : The most crucial and important step was the installation of these images. The people of the locality celebrated the occasion for days together. In fact, the people from far and wide would assemble near the place of installation and recited hymns and performed havana and yagna. These comprised the main features of the celebrations, after which, under the showers of floral petals, the godly images were given bath in holy waters of Ganges, Surya Putri—Tawi, Chandrabhaga (Chinab) and even sprinkling of water from several springs of Kashmir was a normal function. The landlord clad in a white dhoti only would be assisted by pandits and brahmins in the performance of yagna and finally placing the images on the required places say panels of the water springs. After the Asthapana of the icons the Brahmins were served with vegetarian meals and sweets followed by a collective feast. The whole celebration was used to be gay and festive. The deliberations sometimes would run for three days culminating in the installation of the icons.

*Historical and Cultural Perspective* : The study of icons, statues, carved stony images opens a new vista for the cultural growth of the local people.

## THE VALLEY OF SILENCE AND SPRING STONES

About hundred kms. north to the city of Jammu, there is a beautiful vale of conifers surrounded by the low and high cliffs—the valley of Panchari. Once you enter the vale, you forget about the other world. Slow swaying of the deodar branches, the clicking of wooden flowers of chir, chirping of

birds new to urbanites are but a few sounds which make one conscious of the flowing life. This vale is surrounded by three main cliffs, which are housed by three legendary gods—Sankri Devta, Sopor Devta and Sankhpaul Devta. Sankhpaul is supposed to be the greatest of all who dominates the whole kingdom of gods. These gods include small tribal gods, gods of groups, and gods of whole panchari including the surrounding vicinities. Each family worship with aweness the serpent god. The icons of coiled serpent ranging from  $1' \times 1'$  to  $3' \times 1.5'$  dimension can be seen in "Chopalas", on the panels of springs and on the stages erected for deities. In addition to the serpent gods called "Moharas", a number of mythical figures, Yakashas and Yakashinies etc., are very much prevalent among the artistic carvings on the sand stones.

*Nature of Sculptures* : The sculptures are artistically chiselled out of ordinary black and grey sand-stones. Their sharp frontal lining, Gandhara style of round facial expression, deep, large and pointed eyes, their mystic internal smile and above all the clear cut chiselled organs of the body show the acumen ship of those craftsmen who worked thousands of years back with all the internal faith. In reality it was their strong faith which developed in them an urge to fashion gods full of life out of the raw stones. These sculptures can be placed in two main classes. First, the class of deities and tribal gods and the second the stones on the panels of the springs.

*The Tribal Gods and Deities* : The former class is the outcome of endless faith emerged through the travelling of legends. These legends are somewhat folk in nature though here and there their mythical connection with religious books cannot be overruled. Most of the tribal gods and deities are related to Mahabhatta period by the common folk. These figures are generally carved out of fine grey stones. The stones used for these purposes were in three dimensions. All the tribal gods and deities are sculptured out of single stone of fine nature. Thus the statues worshipped in this valley Sankhpaul, Sopor and Sankari are chiselled out of the grey sand stones.

*Spring Stones* : The stones used for the spring decorations are coarse and absolutely black. They are cut in square flat slabs having different motifs in two dimensions only. Their size varies from  $1' \times 1'$  to  $3' \times 2'$ . Some-

times a single slab was used for carving a number of figures together. Water springs of Panchary are very rich with multifigured single sand stone slabs. Mostly a single such slab was used for a single spring. About half a km. towards Nullah from Panchary Bazar there is a dead spring buried with such numerous slabs. I was virtually stopped and disallowed to dig out such art pieces which lie in spoiled condition and may disappear totally in due course of time. Only three of them could be cleaned from the tonnes of mud which covered them. These stone slabs are conical in structure, broad flat at the base gradually tapering up at the apex. Two to three panels of these flat slabs are carved with different figures. They are almost  $3' \times 2'$  in measurement. The figures chiselled out are the watery motifs like nymphs, Yakashini with a pot full of water, snakes, lotus flower etc. Some slabs contain unknown and unidentified deities. Almost all the slabs contain the figures of horse riders and warriors with a trotting gesture and sometimes in full gallop.

*Blind Faith* : The landlords in whose farm these slabs exist, in a dry spring, worship them as their deities. Any suffering or sorrow that befalls them is directly connected with the course of these deities. As such some kind of a sacrifice is given to profitiate the deities. Generally, a lamb or a cock was sacrificed a year ago to satisfy these deities but now only 'Halwa' is considered enough. They call it 'Balidan' (sacrifice). They do not allow any man from outside to touch these carved slabs. We happened to wash the mud from the buried slabs placed since years together in the dead spring but the landlord was adamant fearing the wrath of the deities. According to him there are about hundred and eight springs along with the same number of carved slabs buried in his farm. If he is true the vast treasury of folk art finished in fine taste is buried there waiting for the Archives to explore the possibilities of preserving these monuments of Dogra folk art in the museums.

These carved images can be traced to four generations back to the one of the landlords, before which none knew their origin. However, the old men of village think that these slabs were chiselled out about eight hundred years ago. These springs, which are dead now, were alive four dynasties ago.

The artists of these artistic figures belonged to distinct families called 'Salade' and 'Batade' derived from rocks and stones. These artists were fully devoted to this art. They commanded equal respect from landlords and common masses despite their low caste. Landlords, feudal lords, rich men of the society used to encourage these men in sculpturing the ordinary stones to bring them to life. They were financially sound enough as they were rewarded every now and then. Lately due to reorganisation, brisk modernisation, the fall of the feudal lords and change of interest led these artists to the cities where they adopted the profession of masons. Thus they got dissolved among the masses. The old monumental work was either buried or ruined in the process of alternate heating and cooling due to sun and rains.

### **SOME WATER SPRINGS DECORATED WITH CARVED STONES**

#### **Udhampur**

Starting from Udhampur, near the bank of Devika, there are three Baolies (Springs) decorated with carved dark sand stones of small measurements. The subject of these carved stones—half reliefs varies from mythical subjects to the local social legends and beliefs.

(A) There is a small spring near the bank of Devika by the side of small temple. Its water is generally used for taking bath. It is decorated with nine carved stones cemented around the small apertures in between the slabs.

#### **The Subject of These Stones from Left to Right on the Central Panel :**

- (i) Two Yakshinies with water kalshas—as water motif of  $1.2' \times 9"$  measurements. Figures are very sharp.
- (ii) Three-faced God either Brahma on Garuda or Kartika on Peacock. The relief is not very much clear.
- (iii) The central place on the panel might have been once covered with a stone but now the space is left ; there is no stone.

- (iv) Coiled serpent of  $9'' \times 9''$  measurement.
- (v) A couple with water Kalsha—might be a Yaksha and Yakshini of  $9'' \times 9''$  measurement.

### **On the Left Lateral Side :**

- (i) A lady figure with Kalsha of  $1' \times 6''$  measurement.
- (ii) A lady figure with Kalsha of  $1' \times 6''$  measurement.
- (iii) A lady with a baby of  $9'' \times 6''$  measurement.

All the above reliefs are vague and eroded. Yakshini—a lady with water Kalsha—is the subject of good omen as it depicts the life water (Amrit) for longer and prosperous life.

(B) On the other side of Devika, there is a big Baoli (Water Spring) cardoned by big sand slabs. On a stone, cemented on the right bank of the Baoli, its construction date is carved which reads Baisakha 1855 Samvat. It is not sure whether the number after Eighteen hundred is fifty five or twenty two. It also conveys the vague date in Hazri.

### **The carved Stones from Left Side to Right One :**

1. Hanumana with Sanjivani in one hand and his one foot crushing adaitya.
2. Ganapati Ganesha with pot-belly and four arms.
3. Shivji and Parvati by the side of Nandi, the sacred carrier of Shiva. An elephant is also shown on one side. The holy Ganges is emitting out of the hair of Shivji.
4. Vishnu on the bed of Shesh Naga giving birth to Brahma who rests on the lotus flower coming out of his belly.
5. Brahma on—Garuda or Kartika on Peacock—the carving is very clear.
6. A coiled serpent.

The measurements of the above sand stones carvings are generally in the range of  $1' \times 9''$ . Black sand-stone is used for all half reliefs.

### **(C) Third baoli is situated nearby the 2nd one.**

Its water is dirty and the spring water is not used for any purpose. It has given way to mosses on its surface. The carved stones are covered with algal and fungal plants with a plenty of dirt.

### The Stones from Right to Left are as Follows :

- (i) A coiled snake of  $9'' \times 9''$  measurements.
- (ii) Euclyptus or Cidrus plant of  $2.5'' \times 9''$ .
- (iii) Four armed Ganpati Ganesha  $6'' \times 6''$ .
- (iv) Euclyptus or Cidrus plant of  $2.5'' \times 9''$ .
- (v) Four petaloid flower.

Three carved stones are loosely placed nearby the same baoli :—

- (i) Brahma on Garuda of  $1' \times 9''$ .
- (ii) A Yaksha with a water kalsha of  $3'' \times 6''$ .
- (iii) A Yakshini with a water-kalsha of  $9'' \times 9''$ .

Surroundings of Udhampur contain several water springs beautifully decorated with these stones. Baolies at Badan and near Mian Ke Bagh are few examples.

(D) **Jib** : About twelve kilometres from Udhampur and two kilometres from main highway—there is a rich land of water springs. It is said that there were about 108 water springs in Jib. Most of them are dead now. Others which are under use, again are classified on the basis of their use—men Baolies and lady Baolies.

A few are meant only for drinking purposes, others for bathing purposes and still others are for washing purposes. There are a number of spring stones of significance arranged on the panels of these Baolies. The water spring named as Shahen Di-Baan is particularly mentioned here.

From left to right :

- (i) Three mermaids. Two on flanks are joined by tales.
- (ii) A palanquin with three ladies sitting in. Two figures of the palanquin carriers ; one is having a fan the other a club.
- (iii) An image of big sized Machh-Avtar having four hands. One is having Sankh, in the second a bowl, in the third hand a lōtus bud and in the fourth a knife-like structure.
- (iv) An image of Hanumana with Sanjivani.
- (v) A designed structure made up of pillars used in making palaces for support.

Other carved images are not visible.

(See the Illustrations)

### (E) Paap Nashi Baoli of Sudh Mahadeva

There are twelve carved stones cemented on a simple panel. Their measurement is almost the same i.e. 1'×9".

From left to right :

- (i) A horseman visiting a King.
- (ii) An image of Jagan-Natha.
- (iii) Narsingh Avtara and Harnakshap Vadh.
- (iv) Brahma's birth.
- (v) Figures of Gorakh Nath and a King.
- (vi) Matasya Avtara.
- (vii) Ganesha on a rat and two Dwarpalikas.
- (viii) A duel fight between two Gods.
- (ix) Rama, Lakshmana and Sita.
- (x) Shiva and Parvati on a bull.
- (xi) Vishnu and Raja Bali.
- (xii) Varah Avtara.

In the centre, water is flowing from lion's mouth. Near by there is a coiled serpent's relief. The carved images are sculptured by Nathu of Purmandel about 75 years back.

There is another spring in the way to Mantalai from Sudh Mahadeva, if we go on foot. There are several carved beautiful stones scattered in deserted form.

### (F) Badi Baan of Chinaini

(Big water spring of Chanaini)

There are about thirty-five carved figures in square stones having ciderus plants intercepting every two.

#### **Figures Carved from Left to Right.**

- (i) Kalimardan.
- (ii) The baingi of Sharavana (Balance in the two sides of which faithful and sincere Sharvana carried his blind parents).
- (iii) Two fighting figures in duel form.
- (iv) A camel rider.
- (v) A horse rider soldier with arms.
- (vi) A duel wrestling.
- (vii) A yogic chakera (See illustrations)
- (viii) A saddled horse being carried by a horse rider.
- (ix) Two beauties sitting on palanquin-like structure.

- (x) Veraha Avtara.
- (xi) Matasya Avtara.
- (xii) Four-headed figure of Kartik sitting on peacock.
- (xiii) A coiled serpent.
- (xiv) Mahaveera.
- (xv) Sat Narayan, a four-handed figure with two-folded hands.
- (xvi) Rama, Lakshmana and Sita in a palanquin, might be Pushpak Vimana.
- (xvii) A flower structure like yogic structure.
- (xviii) Ganapati Ganesha on a rat.
- (xix) Durga on a lion with four hands.
- (xx) A vague eroded figure.
- (xxi) Vishnu giving birth to Brahma.
- (xxii) A figure of Dharam Raj on Buffalo.
- (xxiii) Rama and Lakshmana with bows and arrows.
- (xxiv) A round figure with four petaloid structure.  
There are two such figures on a simple panel.
- (xxv) A running figure with a pot. Either Babru Vahan bringing Amrit (life water) or Hanumana bringing Sanjivani.
- (xxvi) Petaloid form of Sun, in between these another figure of sun having eight petals inside.
- (xxvii) Narsingh Avtara.
- (xxviii) A figure with a kalasha perhaps Vaman Avtara.
- (xxix) A horse rider with a spear and sword like weapon in hand.
- (xxx) A palanquin with a lady inside having kaharas—the male carriers of the palanquin.
- (xxxi) An elephant with a palanquin placed on its back—a beauty sitting in with a lady servant dancing before her mistress.
- (xxxii) A palanquin with a beauty inside carried by four carriers, two in sitting posture carrying the palanquin on their hands. There are two ladies with two garlands in standing posture.
- (xxxiii) A horse rider with a gun in hand.
- (xxxiv) A horse rider with a gun in hand.
- (xxxv) An elephant carrying palanquin.

Every form of the holy relief is intercepted by cidrus plant.

or a reticulated leaf or a flower in between.

This water spring was also decorated by Nathu of Pur-mandal, about eighty years ago.

### (G) Water Springs of Panchary Niabat

(Water Spring in Meer).

(a) Near Meer on the main road there is a water spring may be hundreds of years of age. It is decorated with a number of sand stones carved with deities like Vishnu Avtara, Sun Chakra, Yakshini and Yakshas etc.

(b) *In Yugial Meer* (Upper ranges about half km. from Meer) : Outer panels contain four square carved stones, Hanumana, a goddess in sitting posture, a carrier with two horses and a horse rider.

On the later flanks there are three stones in eroded condition. Middle panels contain four carved stones which from left are as follows :

- (i) One big Chakra with a number of petals as symbolic of sunrays.
- (ii) A multilegged dragon type structure with riders.

Next two stones are in eroded condition.

The upper panels of spring contain the following stones from left to right :—

- (i) Sun, (ii) A palanquin, (iii) Peacock, (iv) Ganesha etc.

(c) *Akhad Devta, Guarh* : A water spring with a number of eroded and uncarved stones with the images of coiled snakes, Yaksha, Yakshini, Sunchakra, Vishnu giving birth to Brahma etc.

(d) *Kali Lehar, Meer* : A beautiful water spring having twenty figured of structure stones. The strange thing is that the deity figures are disappearing. Its panels contain the warriors, horse riders, personified sun, a palanquin with a number of palanquin carriers. A violated eyed lady figure. Most of them are the water motifs.

(e) *Dol Bauli, Meer* : There are in total 12 carved stones. Most of them are eroded. They are not cared for. Most of the figures carved are of warriors instead of mythical figures like gods or goddesses. There is again a lady sitting in a palanquin.

## (H) Water Springs in Panchary

(a) Main water spring of Panchary is situated near Panchary Bazar. This water spring is significant for containing a number of images of Dogra horse riders. The horses are well armoured and decorated. The Dogra warrior is wearing a Dogra Turban with a sword in his hand. There are about five such beautiful carved stones.

Along with Dogra warrior there are images of palanquin and lady figures sitting in. There are a number of figures of mythical gods, like Ganesha, Vishnu and other godly images. A number of stones are in eroded condition having the effect of scorching sun and chilly winds upon them.

(b) Lower water springs of Panchary are not so sophisticated in decoration but they contain slabs of multi-carvings of deities, warriors, palanquins and Yakshas and Yakshinies. Water is coming out of the slabs having beautiful aperture. These slabs contain the figures of ladies in palanquins, carriers and a number of horse riders.

(c) A number of dry springs contain a number of slabs with carved images as detailed above.

# 4

## *Terracotta and Clay Work*

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The folk-painting was the first ever expression of a human being. Excavations have shown the evidence that the uncivilised human being too possessed the urge to express his feelings by way of drawing the abstract and real figures with the help of a burnt wood piece or a charred coal. Such painted rocks of very old period have come to light. With the emergence of tribes came the idea of tribal gods—the greatest and the most clever invention of the clever man. Deities in the form of mystic figures, on the one hand, governed the tribal dynasties with their mystic powers through the chieftains of the tribes and, on the other hand, were the basic sources of cultural heritage cascading from generations to generations. The cultural history thus emerged from the tribal rituals all along orally to the present generation. With the invention of tribal gods came the idea of decorating them. Man by instinct is a decorative being. He not only decorates his body but also dwellings in which he lives. Even the very uncivilised tribes of the world are not devoid of this instinct. They decorate their body with different types of coloured beads, bearings, and often paint their faces, limbs and other parts of the body with shining colours. Red Indians, the tribes of Andaman & Nicobar, the tribes of Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh & Ladakh are few examples of people who are very fond of this type of decoration. The collective living in the form of a family infused among them the idea of decorating their huts. With the achievement of civility, an urge for making their

dwellings neat, tidy and clean emerged among the common folk. It started with neatly thatching of mud huts followed by thawing and brushing of the outer walls. Slowly and slowly the art of decorating the huts created a competition among the families thus inspiring them to renovate their dwellings. The competition was very much prevalent, unknowingly improving their ways of living. To decorate the huts internally, they collected beautiful coloured stones, beads, even the animal bones, skulls etc., which were painted with different shining colours, and were placed systematically in the huts. Thus their spirit of aesthetic sense developed. With the time and competition man developed several ways and techniques by which tribal folk art emerged as superb among all the aesthetic tastes of human being. The more sagacious tribes became the masters and others lagged behind. The first ever technique to personify their imagination might be of making toys out of thawed mud. Hence the idea of terracotta came into existence.

Dogras by virtue of their soft feelings and humble hospitable nature are also the chips of same cradle. The geography of land possessed the evidences that the people lived thousands of years back were fond of terracotta art. The excavations at Ambran (Akhnoor) show the positive results. In the same way the pieces of terracotta pottery were excavated from a mount near Man-talai. Dogras were very much fond of terracotta, pottery designing, embroidery, Phulkari, wood carving, wall painting, paper work etc. Metallic utensils were painted with floral designs and sometimes with mythical figures. Costumes stitching, metal art and above all the toys made out of rags, straws, clay etc. were the attractions for them.

*Terracotta* : Ambran in Akhnoor and mount near Man-talai revealed terracotta art to the excavations. The busts of beautiful figures, male as well as female were excavated from Ambran. Such three pieces are displayed in the Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu and a number of such pieces are also displayed in the State Museum of Chandigarh. These busts show the acumen of the crafts-men as these are perfect in detail, realistic and seem to be alive in their glass cupboards. Besides, a number of pieces of plates, jugs, cups etc. were also found in the excavations. These pieces depict the decoration signs of

twimmers, trailers and floral circles showing the beautiful coverings on the external rim of the mouth of jugs and plates. Keen observation led to the conclusion that very minute and fine floral design was very much there on the inner sides of the plates also. Jugs were having cyclic rounds of these floral twimmers tapering down to the bottom. This art is very much prevalent in the present generation also. Though, the pottery making has become a profession and only a few families are sticking to this kind of job, yet their fine taste can be traced back to the old folk art. The particular clan attached to this profession was named "Kumhara". In the old days a particular corner of the town or village was allotted to these craftsmen as they wanted to settle themselves at a place which was near the source of fine clay. In those days, these craftsmen had quite a prestigious position at different rituals but with the passage of time their number dwindled and those few left gave up their profession. Now-a-days the mud made pottery is used during summer only for its cooling effect. Pitchers and "Suiahies" are in great demand in this season. It does not mean that their craftsmanship is limited to these items of utility only. Their art is certainly commendable in making artistic items for decorative purposes. Since the taste of customers has become fine, the craftsmen have kept the pace with their desires. Beautifully designed flower-pots, flower-vases, ash-trays, toys like running horses, birds on trees, figures of different deities, human busts, band of choir singers, Lord Krishna encircled by a number of Gopikas, Ram Rajya Sanghasan altogether with Lakshmana, Sita and Hanumana sitting at their feet are but a few toys made by these craftsmen.

The mud used for the above purpose is usually clay. After giving shape to the thawed mud over the wheel the elements so prepared are dried in the sun and finally heated in the ovens or kilns of dry cow dung, and coal, so as to convert the raw figures and pots into terracotta. Such pieces afterwards are sent to the market. Sometimes the toys so prepared are painted with shining colours and are made ready for the festivals. The new generation, however, improvised the folk art. Instead of making individual items after hard labour, the blocks of metals and wood are prepared. These blocks are readily used for wholesale preparation of toys, statues, deities

and other figures. Particular items are prepared in a particular season and festival. For instance, the statues of Lord Ganesha, Lakshmi, Sarswati, items of decoration i.e. candle-stand, incense stand, ash tray and so many other items are prepared in bulk near Diwali festival. Statues of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, a figure of Lanka Fort, Hanumana, monkeys, fruits etc. are made ready during Dushera festival. Statues of Shakti, Vaishnu Mata, Sukarala Mata, Maha-Kali on their carriers are made during 'Navrataras'. All is commercialised now. To give the exact colour of sandal wood and metallic appearance, different colours are used with clay mud. Sometimes black, red or grey mud is used to serve the purpose. A few of the craftsmen have shifted from mud to plaster of paris. Now men of more dexterity and polish are engaged in this pursuit.

Apart from craftsmanship the common Dogra folk celebrate several festivals when several thawed mud made figures are worshipped. During Shiv-Ratri mud made Shiva Lingam with Chhatra is distributed among the worshippers by the ladies of "Kumaharas". These figures are symbolic of Shiva—the god destroyer. In another festival—"Bachh-dua" mud made cow and calf are made near the panels of water tanks or near any water source available within the jurisdiction of village or town. The new mothers who have given birth to male babies worship these figures with gusto reciting the folk hymns in a group together. They use milk, butter, honey, flowers, fruits and corn to worship these idols. Sometimes these figures are made out of thawed flour which are worshipped with moist grams, thread and vermillion. Often the figures of 'Jats' and 'Jatnies' in a dancing pose and hillarious mood altogether with vegetables and fruits are also the source of attraction during the festival. "Jat" thus made wears turban on head, a club in hand, while "Jatni" carries a "Chati" having water-milk inside. There is another festival very popular among the ladies—"Dhrubdi" when almost all the celebrations of "Bachh-dua" are repeated. The most popular festival ceremonised by ladies (married) is "Karvachouth". On this day a figure of some deity related to the happily married lady is made by mixing cow dung and mud. It is named as 'Veeran Kurhi'. It is decorated with red embroidered piece of cloth. It is this figure around which

ladies clad in their matrimonial and heavily decorated clothes recite the folk song of "Karvada" pushing their "Thalies" full of dry fruits and other sweets along with a small "Kumb" of water, from one lady to the other in a circular manner. When the circle is complete they pour a few drops of water from their "Kumbs", over the deity, centrally placed. Thus they celebrate the long life of their husbands. In another celebration "Dhaage" a figure of a couple of king and queen is made out of thawed flour and is worshipped. The ladies wind the yellow cotton thread around their wrists and fast and pray for prosperity of their sons. All these festivals have folk tales in the background ; the human forms of flour are the pivot of all these ceremonies. No doubt, all these festivals are primarily meant to propagate the sentimental love and affection and to make the family bond more effective, yet herein also folk art emerges by dint of rituals that are performed.

## *Folk Art of Wood Work*

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To decorate the surroundings was the second step of man. The woods were chiselled out, trees were given different shapes. Figures of more visible animals, birds and plants were carved out on trunks of the living plants followed by carving on the wood pieces of different shapes. The rough surfaces were smoothed with the help of pointed stones first, followed by metallic instruments. Thus fossilised carved wooden pieces have been discovered during excavations in different parts of the country. The wood carving was very much popular among the common folk. Slowly and slowly wooden pieces were given the shape of animals, birds and other objects of nature. This was the climax of wood-work folk art after which creative genius developed it into a fine art. It was specialised afterwards by a few families only with more sophisticated equipments. Selection of wood, chopping it into various requisite measurements, chiselling finally to form the required figure were the different processes.

The wood work folk art was very much prevalent in the domains of Dogra territory. Dogra feudal Lords were fond of decorating their chambers with wood-carvings, intricate carved ceiling panels of heavy doors, furniture like chair backs, table tops, wooden boxes, antimony chambers, cigarette cases, candle stands, flower bases, hanky chambers, hand sticks, spoons, pails, salt cellers, nut crackers, razor cases, staffs, flutes and other musical instruments and even the pommels of swords and knives were carved beautifully with intricate floral designs.

*Selection of Wood:* Generally the wood of all conifers, cedrus plants like pine, deodar, euclyptus was used for the above purposes. For longer life and to overcome the effect of weather and time the wood of shisham, walnut and sometimes even of willow was used especially for handles of knives, pommels of swords, legs of the chairs etc. It gave the proper support. First of all wood pieces were chopped out, smoothed with chisels and then followed the real process of giving shape to these wood pieces with all the vital acumen ship of craftsmen. The craftsmen generally started their work without drawing any figure or design. They divided its whole surface into directions. A raw caricature was drawn followed by the chisel work. The job was time consuming and painstaking. The carved surface also made a protective layer for years together. Just like pottery, wood work was also limited to certain families. The modern generation did not opt its parental profession thus giving a great setback to this folk art of the old generation.

The carving of wooden planks was very much popular among the rich families of Dogras. The bases and tops of pillars of the houses were decorated with border designs of varied forms. Fine carving showed an immense work of man-power with fine taste of craftsmanship. Ceilings were well decorated with floral decoration of fine wood work. Chiselling of wood of cedrus plants was a major job. Generally the open petaloid form of flowers were designed along with twiners, trailers with alternate leaflets. The big slippers of the full trees were given the shapes of horizontal and vertical beams out of chirs, deodars and kail (kachir). The old wooden buildings were erected on the support of these beams horizontally and vertically placed so as to cross each other at the edges. It was the old technique of architecture symbolic of Duggar wood work buildings' architecture. Even the beams of 30 to 60 feet length, placed horizontally, were supported by big logs which had alburnuming floral designs on their base and on the top.

The massive and single storeyed building of Sudh-Maha Dev Temple is glaring example of this art. The specially designed first storey, exclusively built out of massive logs of wood, smoothed and oiled, having an intricate wooden network on

the outer side of the chamber which worked as curtain as well as the air passages during summer. It was the occasional summer residence of the kings of Chenaini. The heavy wooden doors with very heavy double framework were externally carved with floral and border designs of various forms on the frames and big floral petaloid expanded forms of twinners on the outer planks of wooden doors.

On the same lines, an airy single storeyed massive building, is erected at Yugial in the vicinity of Meer in Panchary Niabat. This building is situated on the other side of hill of Sankri Devta and belongs to a Rajput family which migrated from Kangra centuries ago. Big logs of wood are used as pillars for supporting the horizontally cut and smoothed slippers of Kail (Kachir). Over these horizontal beams very thick planks of wood cover the whole ceiling. A very big 'HAL' was thus erected with thatched roof but polished smooth ceiling of thick wooden planks. Inside, there is a store separated by double lining of mobile wooden planks used as mobile store. These wooden planks serve the purpose of mobile doors having two panels. Upper panel is carved with floral designs.

There are several buildings in the town of Katra Vaishno Devi exclusively constructed out of wood; such old buildings can be observed, built exclusively out of cedrus wood—decorated with figures, floral designs and borderlining of various forms. Fine cut wooden network is used in the parlours to separate inside from out but simultaneously joining the two with the passage of air. Figurative carvings on the panels of wooden doors of the parlours, Devi Dwaras, and store-houses were the symbols of rich among the common masses. With the change of values cemented several storeyed buildings have taken over these wooden houses and they are regarded as a sign of affluence. The old artistically constructed and decorated houses are falling day by day without being cared for.

Prof. V.R. Khajuria, the author of a book on Jammu murals, "Samhal-Us-Kalle-Di", describes an example of hilly buildings—"Pahari Haweli" of a Lumberdar at Bachal near famous temple of Gouri Kund. Beautifully carved wooden pillars and heavy doors are the conspicuous example of Pahari art (wood work). The artistic designing on frames of doors,

the bases and tops of pillars and on pillars themselves are the evidences of craftsmanship of the local craftsmen.

*Temples and Images* : Most of the hill-temples especially the snow laden areas of Duggar are having special feature of wooden temples with wooden images. In the region of Bhadarwah, Kishtwar and Doda, temples are exclusively erected out of wooden planks of Deodar. Even the images erected inside are of pure wood. The wood used for such images was generally dark in colour, durable and hard enough to stand the exposure. These temples are having somewhat Gumpha in structure. The temples of Vasukinaga in Bhadarwah and other related temples in the 'Gadda' village of the region, house the stone and metallic images of Nagas but the houses and the buildings of the temples are made of cedar wood.

Wooden temples of Kullu, Kangra and Chamba are very popular and their peculiar design and decoration attract the scholars of eminence from far and near. Carved wooden pillars collected from Bhakhla Devi temple of district Mandi and placed in Simla museum resemble very much with the aforesaid temple of this region. Even the figurative carvings on wooden panels, a king smoking a 'Hukah' attended by two attendants, a horse rider, a number of figures of animals like elephant, lion, a few birds, palaquin carriers are displayed in Simla museum from Acc. No. : 77/148 to 77/152. The most conspicuous and rich storehouse of the folk wood work art is Datta Nagar, Rampur. A wooden Shiva image on a buffalo with a long standing image of Parvati, a wooden door frame carved with two figures of peacocks having fine lining and floral border designing in the centre are but a few specimens collected from Data Nagar, Rampur. (Acc. 68, 81-197). The best collection from Dattateaya temple, Data Nagar are the twelve wooden masks of different animals and demons. These masks were used on Baisakhi festival during the demon dance like that of mask dance of Ladakh and that of Lahul and Spiti. These masks are artistically carved in the form of faces of different elements of nature, animals and human beings. They are richly coloured. Red, black, blue and yellow colours are profusely used for the decoration. The wooden masks belong to the 18th and the 19th century. In the hilly tracts of upper

ranges the stray crow figures, made out of rough wooden logs, were found enveloped in a number of rough human masks. The sticks are crossed and claded in old rags having a mask on the top and giving the impression of human being thus straying back the birds which spoil the early germination and seedling. Sometimes these masks are made out of cardboard, paper, mud and clay. The most popular masks used were made out of raw wood which lasted longer. The wooden temples of Kullu, Kangra and Chamba are the source of attraction for the art critics and folklorists who find that the wood of these temples has survived for hundreds of years in disagreeable climatic conditions. Wooden images erected inside still have sharp lining though, here and there, the signs of erosion have developed.

In certain parts of Dogra land, wooden figures of the tribal gods and human beings were chiselled and placed in the temples on fulfilment of the wishes of the believers. These believers after having cherished their wishes, travelled in the locality with the carved wooden images, half reliefs humming the musical instruments to celebrate the installation of these images in the temple before the god who blessed them. On the upper ranges of Sangrote, near Reasi, one such temple in ruins is still there with a number of such wooden godly images. They are symbolic of pure faith rather than aesthetic sense. These wooden images are again carved out of cedrus wood. It is said that king Shalvahan erected this temple after being defeated by enemy, taking shelter in the high cliffs of Reasi Range from where he could see the planes of Sialkot—his kingdom. It is believed that he wished his kingdom back from the image of Shakti which he got; thus he erected the wooden image of Goddess Shakti as well as his replica to celebrate the success.

Near Salal there is another famous temple called the temple of Chariana Devta. Here, according to a legend, a lady grass-cutter happened to find a stone. She took it up to use that for grinding in her house. In the way the stone fell down on the earth and all her efforts to lift it proved futile. So, a metallic rod was used as lever to pull up the stone from the earth, but, to her shock, red blood bubbled out of the stone. The news of this strange phenomenon spread in the

whole vicinity and afterwards a temple was erected there. This is something very strange that this godly image is worshipped for relief from diseases. The patient who is relieved from a disease after worshipping the stone image, places there his image of wood or stone. Such images are of a man's size. The courtyard of this temple had 18 such wooden images and hundreds of stone images. The image of Chariana god was retained in a beautifully decorated carved wooden temple. Outside godly images over strips of wood, made out of conifers, were installed. Such two pieces have been displayed in the Dogra Art Gallery, Gandhi Bhawan, Jammu. In the first case the piece of wood used was a bit large and survived for years the onslaughts of rain and sun. The images carved on this piece are quite visible. There are four figures carved on the piece, three of them have apron shaped clothing with crown-shaped head gears and a water Kalsha in the right hand while their left hand rest on their waist. The fourth one in the same posture is naked. The second piece is in a deteriorated condition. Impressions of seven faces of erect human beings are visible keeping their hands on each others' waists thus forming a chain.

*Household Wooden Folk Art Pieces :* Apart from the godly images and surroundings in which these images are housed there are a number of household articles made out of wood during celebrations, festivals and rituals. During the marriage of girls a number of toys made out of wood and clay symbolising fruits, animals, birds and even sometimes household things and vegetables were given along with other items of dowry. This custom, though not popular now, still prevails in some regions. For religious rituals a wooden palanquin like structure was made, called 'Daryahs'. In this palanquin a pair of 'Guda Gudi' was kept showing bride and bridegroom sitting in the palanquin. Sometimes these were personified as tribal gods and were worshipped before and after the performance of the matrimonial rituals. There is another very popular structure made of wooden rods triangularly arranged. Each rod has a number of wooden images of birds. The whole structure is coloured red; it is known as 'Toran'. They are erected before the celebration of marriage on the frame of the main door to ward off the ill-

effects of evil eye. The 'Vedi' a palanquin shaped square structure is erected over the four small pillars placed at each corner, joined at the top by horizontal rods with a flower in centre where all the rods converge to form a dome-shaped structure. Under this structure only, along with the recitation of Vedic hymns, the matrimonial ceremony is performed. The Hawan Kund is centrally placed and the bride and the bride-groom while walking around it take the sacred oath and enter into a perpetual bond with each other.

In the remote corners and hilly places of the land very big wooden bowls fixed in the soil are used for giving 'Sajji' to 'Pattu', a woollen cloth. Once the Sajji is given it never shrinks or expands which otherwise may happen. In these areas, even the wooden utensils are used for storing water, big boxes for storing corn, small boxes for keeping the things of daily use in them. Tops and lateral sides of these boxes are carved with several motifs. Some are abstract but others are definitely the product of myths and prevalent beliefs. Some small boxes contain very fine and intricate work of artistically chiselled and finished wood and these are still in use among the common folk in the hilly areas of Shivalik. They are powder boxes, cigarette cases, pencil and pen stands etc. Sometimes these carved wooden boxes are painted with colours of different shades and are even studded with ivory so as to make them attractive and sophisticated. Now-a-days the conifer wood is being replaced by the more hard wood of Shisham and more glossy wood of walnut trees.

This aspect of folk art is becoming unpopular day by day with modernisation of the society. The plastic work as well as the metallic work is becoming popular. Above all there is a craze for electronic equipments and gadgets and the abstract carving of stones is becoming the fashion of the day.

# 6

## *Folk Paintings*

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The buildings of rich Dogras, feudal lords and Dogra-landlords were decorated with mosaic work of wall painting. The ruins of murals are the evidences. The kingly dwellings of rich men, called Havelies, remained the source of jobs for the artists. This art can be traced to the folk paintings of the floors, walls, grain stores, ritual places, Dehries etc. It is still very much prevalent among the common folk.

On broad canvas the folk paintings can be placed in the following categories :—

1. Floor painting :

- (a) Ritual floor paintings.
- (b) Rade.
- (c) Tulsi Puja.

2. Wall painting :

- (a) Wall paintings during the rituals.
- (b) Diwali.
- (c) Nagpanchmi.
- (d) Hoyee
- (e) Tulsi Puja.

*Floor Painting* : It is a very common process of decoration among the common folk. The floors of mud houses and huts are swept and brushed with cow dung. The brushing of the floor with cow dung is the routine process, say twice a week. Sometimes the brushing of floor with cow-dung is so smooth and shining that one can forget the cemented floors. The

floor is swept and then brushed with cow-dung; when it is half dried a round stone is rubbed against the surface of the floor to make it smooth. The brushing of the cow dung is in two ways. In normal routine it is always moving with the hand in half circles so that the hollow of the circle remains towards the door, but in conditions of mourning and sad happenings the movement of the hand is just in reverse direction. So an outsider knows the situation of the house looking at the surface of the floor only when he enters the house.

These cow-dung brushed house floors are decorated with drawings of different floral and symmetrical designs. Floor painting is very popular as well as common among the other communities also; for instance, in Bengal it is called Alpna, in U.P. and Bihar it is called Arpana, in Gujarat and Maharashtra it is known as Rangoli, while in south as Kolam. In the lower ridges of the Dogra region the name given is "Chowka Poorna". While in Mandi it is called 'Lipna'. The term Lipna is widely used in Duggar ranges for coating a wall or floor with any semi-solid thing, for instance, cow-dung, moist mud etc.

*Colours Used* : Since folk painting is limited to the floors of the huts and dwellings only, improvised colours are prepared from readily available things; for instance, white colour is made from flour, if it is to be used dry. After powdering the rice with water the liquid form of the white colour is used. Makol or Parola is also used sometimes for white colour. Yellow colour is made by powdering the turmeric roots and sometimes the dried Acacia flowers are powdered for yellow colour. Red colour is got by powdering the red bricks ; sometimes Hurmachi or burnt siana or Geri is also used. Saw dust is used for giving tea colour to the floral petals. Burnt almond sheaths for black ; and green by powdering the dried green leaves.

*Designs* : Generally the floral diagrams of flowers as well as pointed geometrical figures are drawn impregnated with rich colours. Open petaloid form of lotus, rose and sometime teggatus are painted on the floor. It is called "Phull-chittarana" (flower painting). In addition to these floral decorations on the floor several border designs are painted. The coloured parallel lines with alternate round ball

shaped structures of other colours drawn at intervals, triangles, squares, sometimes running waves in the brodering lines with leaflets or floral structures in alternate gaps of troughs and crests, leafy and floral twiners in the parallel running borderlines are a few examples of border designs. Among the several figures drawn, figure of mango is very auspicious and a symbol of good omen. Burning lamp is another symbol of happy and prosperous life. Palanquin, Palanquin carriers, vegetables, fruits etc. are other figures drawn in different colours. Generally the primary colours are used to paint these figures. Among the mythical figures Swastika is very popular and perhaps the first figure painted with red lead or vermillion and rice.

Ladies paint the floor with their hands, without any equipment. Even the sketches are not drawn beforehand. However, in certain parts of Himachal, small earthern pot is used for this purpose. A small hole is done in the bottom and liquid colour to be used for painting is put into the pot. The movement of the pot in different directions makes the beautiful designs<sup>8</sup>. Sometimes a hard cloth piece, for instance, canvas piece, is used for this purpose. The ladies during the several rituals decorate the floor by writing certain names on the surface—the process is called Likhnu in Bilaspur and Kangra<sup>9</sup>. In the month of Sawan (July-August) during the celebration of Shivachoutri numbers from 1 to 10 are written in sixteen squares in such a way that when added any way, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, their sum total comes to be 34.

In the Duggar Pradesh, the custom of the reception of a bride is very conspicuous. Generally she is led to a big-octagonal lotus flower drawn with happy shining colours on the floor. The bride walks on, keeping her feet on the cotton-made structures called “Poonian” until she reaches the flowery structure where she is made to sit either on the floor or on a seat arranged over the flower. Generally a pair of feet is painted before the entrance to the chamber pointing the path. Even when the pilgrims return home after their pilgrimage they are received with floral decorated walls and

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8. K.L. Vaidya *The cultural Heritage of the Himalayas*, pp. 94-97.  
9. *Ibid.*

richly decorated floors through which they are led to their chambers. The painting on the floor during such occasions is called 'Chowk-Poorna'.

(a) *Floor Painting during Rituals* : Floor painting is a common decoration during marriage, Mundan and at the celebration of birthday of male baby. People decorate the surroundings of the house as well as the floors of the main chamber called "Pasaar". The floors are washed, brushed with cow dung and painted with 'Parola' (white clay), grey and red mud (burnt siana). Sometimes for the use of black colour, coal is powdered and the black liquid made thereby is applied for designing borderlining. Mostly black colour on such occasions is avoided and instead purple colour is used. The paintings of flowers, twiners, burning lamps and sometimes figures of kids of animals and birds are also drawn and painted accordingly.

(b) *Rade* : The festivals of painting flowers on the floor around the rims of necks of broken earthen pots is very common among the Dogra girls. The rims of such earthen pots are arranged in a circle representing the number of males of the house. These are known as "Rade". The central Rada is supposed to be the biggest and called 'Dhama Rada'; it represents head of the family. The girls coat the place with cow dung and draw coloured floral designs around these rims. Triangles, squares, pentagonals, octagonals and other geometrical figures are also drawn. Drawing the paintings of stars is very popular. Red, yellow, black and purple colours are the main attraction of these designs. Sometimes there is a competition among the girls over these paintings. They eat their food collectively placing their 'Thali' over the rims. After taking food they recite folk songs of Radas. Since the festival falls on the 1st of Sawan, when the rainy season commences, they sing the song of Sawan :

उहु मर कूंजड़िये मड़िये सावन आया ई  
कियां उहुनि अड़िये देस पराया ई  
ओ ! आहो !

UDD MAR KOONJRHIYA MADHIYE—SAWAN AYA YEE  
KIYAN UDDAN NI ARHIYE DES PRAYA YEE  
OH ! AAHO !

This festival symbolises the love of folk art of painting among the young Dogra girls. Different symbols used are having their own significance. The centrally placed big Rada—Dhamma Rada is supposed to be the symbol of family headman controlling the family members while sitting in the centre. On this occasion the newly wedded bride is served with gifts of "Skolde" from in-laws side. They include silken clothing, fruits, ornaments etc. This is a unique custom. Generally the gifts are sent to the girl by her parents. Perhaps this is the only festival when in-laws send the gifts to their daughter-in-law as she used to be in her parental house during the 1st Sawan month after her marriage<sup>10</sup>.

(c) *Floor Painting during Tulsi Puja* : On the occasion of Ekadashi of Kartik month, the ladies worship Tulsi (ocimum). Almost all the Hindu families plant Tulsi which is supposed to be an auspicious plant. On that day ladies go on fast, decorate the dias where the plant is planted. Even the flower pot in which the plant is planted is decorated with red, yellow, blue and purple colours. Sometimes the cemented place of Tulsi is decorated with the writings of Ram-Ram, Saalgram. It is supposed that Tulsi has got the affinity with Saalgram. Thus a folk song is very much popular which is written on the dias of Tulsi in rich colours :—

धन मेरी तुलसां धन मेरे राम  
धन तुलसां धन सालग्राम

DHANN MERI TULSAN DHANN MERE RAM  
DHANN TULSAN DHAN SALGRAM

Prior to this writing Tulsi and Saalgram are worshipped with another famous writing :—

तुलसां महारानी नमो नमः  
ठाकरां मन भानी नमो नमः  
TULSAN MAHARANI NAMO NAMA  
THAKRAN MAN BHANI NAMO NAMA

Along with such colourful writings burning lamps are painted. Ladies on fast sometimes burn the mustered oil lamps day and night for five days upto Puranmashi when they break their fast. The function is also known as "Deeve", the

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10. Doctor Champa Sharma, Sada Sahitya 1978, pp. 87-89.

function of lamps. During these five days daily in the evening the ladies worship Tulsi and recite the hymns. Sometimes ladies arrange the marriage of Tulsi also. I remember an incident when a lady having no ward married Tulsi with Saalgram with all pomp and show of a real marriage. People from far and wide came to see the marriage ceremony. A Saalgram from the temple near the bank of River Tawi was brought in a *palanquin* to Mastgarh in our neighbourhood with all the Baraaties. Tulsi was wedded to Saalgram with all the rituals. Ladies fastened 'Kaleeras' on the branches of Tulsi and at the departure matrimonial songs were sung.

2. *Wall Painting* : This folk painting is also very common among the Dogra folk. The mud and clay thatched huts are washed with a fine layer of cow dung followed by the liquid white clay figures. These figures range from simple farm motifs to the symbols of happiness and progress. Generally, the folk painting is painted during certain celebrations on festivals. Especially the outer front walls are cleaned, washed, brushed with cow dung or black mud followed by folk paintings. The figures painted are related to life. Birds, trees, animals, twiners, trailers, a beauty sitting in a palanquin with a number of "Kaharas" (carriers), sun, moon, Ganpati and its symbol Swastika are a few figures drawn on the walls. The figures painted on the walls of different huts may differ to some extent. For instance, the huts having a celebration of marriage will definitely have the figures related to happy marriage i.e. a lady sitting in a palanquin, a bridegroom, flowery trailers and twiners en-twining the living figures of the bride and bridegroom. While ordinarily the house walls are decorated with flower pots having a twig of a plant with a number of flowers. The most common bird painted on the walls is peacock. This is something strange that leaving the local birds aside, the bird which is quite foreign to the land is painted. It may be due to its connection with deities like the son of Shiva—Kartika or due to its easy drawing. Next to peacock, the birds like house sparrow, swan etc. are painted. Here and there, especially on either side of the entrance door, a pair of cats is also painted.

*Colours Used* : Other colours used along with white clay are brick red, turmeric yellow and black. Generally red and

yellow colours are used during the celebrations like marriage, mundan ceremony etc.

This folk art tradition led folk artists to research further for more bright organic colours which afterwards were used with most sophisticated designs and finished figures on the more improvised canvas of walls especially prepared for this purpose only. Thus, more finished and improvised ways were adopted. Hence there was a time when certain folk artists bridged the gap between the folk art and fine art. A conspicuous example is the wall paintings of chamber of Mahant of Sudhmahadev temple where crude and raw hand of a middle man artist is applied for painting the figures of different subjects. A total of seventeen such paintings still survive. The seventeenth painting however is white-washed therefore its subject is not clear. The subject of these wall paintings is of Puranic and of mythical nature. Two panels of the inner walls of the occupied rooms by Mahant are painted. The main colours used are red, blue, black, grey and bit of yellowish touch is also used in figurative art. Though here and there the borderlining is visible but it is not decorated and designed as in Pahari art.

First panel contains seven paintings the sequence of which from left to right is as follows :--

- (i) Shiva with two aspects—a yogic and other worldly figure attended by two lady figures.
- (ii) Lord Krishna and Sudama with a third unknown figure.
- (iii) Lord Krishna trying to snatch butter from the pots of two Gopies.
- (iv) A lady figure with a peacock. Perhaps this is a figure of a Nayaka in a romantic mood or mythical figure of Kartika.
- (v) A painting of Raas-Lila.
- (vi) A painting of Narsingha Avtara.
- (vii) Shiva in yogic posture having entwined snakes. He is begging from a lady.

In the 2nd panel there are ten paintings out of which nine are visible.

- (i) Mahant/king sitting on a chowki smoking hookah with two attendants.

- (ii) Mahant/king sitting on a chowki attended by an unknown figure.
- (iii) A painting of Radha Krishna.
- (iv) Kalinag vadh.
- (v) A king with warriors.
- (vi) A warrior.

Others are similar paintings. These paintings do not show any creative genius but are a bit rough and crude in form. Thus they cannot be placed in fine art of Pahari paintings but they can link together folk paintings and fine Pahari paintings. These paintings were painted by the artists of second rank.

These artists prepared their own colours like those of fine Pahari artists. Organic colours were got from plants and animals. They are as following :

- (a) *Colours from Plants* : (i) Brown colour was extracted from the bark of acacia. The bark was tanned and dyed, the process was called 'Sajji Dena'.
  - (ii) A shrub called 'Basooti' used to yield red, yellow, lemon yellow, yellow hard and dark yellow colours.
  - (iii) Arjan tree bark yielded yellow colour.
  - (iv) Hartal was also used for yellow colour.
  - (v) Red was obtained from 'Kasumba'.
  - (vi) Saffron was obtained from saffron flower.
- (b) The colours extracted from animals were as follows:—
  - (i) White and grey colours were obtained by burning the shells. The internal part was used as grey while the surface portion as white.
  - (ii) The red colour was got from a red insect named 'Beerbuti' which used to come and live only in the rainy season.
  - (iii) The mango as well as Arjun tree leaves were given to cow the previous day and the next day its urine was collected to get the precipitates of yellow colour.
- (c) Certain colours were extracted from chemicals, i.e. burnt siana, green stone, red oxide etc. and metals like antimony were used for grey and dark colours. Afterwards in miniature fine paintings even gold was used for border-lines and for more intricate fine golden colour.

This was a traditional art which afterwards influenced the

Mugal and the Rajput schools; thus new traditions were established but as far as their equipments in the shape of colour and canvas for miniature paintings were concerned they were still old and traditional. Even the subject of Pahari school was quite different, having Puranic myths and romantic touch of Lord Krishna's Raas Leela, Nayaka's beauty, very similar to those of folk paintings but contrary to the traditional subject of Mugal Durbar as in Mugal and Rajput schools of paintings. This subject can be said as the gift of Pahari folk painting which still prevails.

*Designs and Technique* : No sophisticated technique is applied for trying different designs or figures on the outer walls of mud thatched huts. The huts generally are thatched and washed with grey or dark coloured clay over which white clay is used for drawing floral twiners and figures. Generally the lady of the house draws these figures. Sometimes thatched huts are brushed neatly and plastered with cow-dung over which different paintings are painted with white clay. To add the vitality of colour and decorate the huts, more luxuriously, in addition to white clay brick red and burnt siana colours are also used. These paintings on the outer walls are called 'Chitterna'. Such folk paintings are very popular among the village folk of 'Dhar' and hilly tracts. For drawing figures and designs no caricatures are needed. The folk artists draw directly with 'Kalam' or brush or sometimes straw brush called 'Kuchi' dipped in the desired colour is used. However, to achieve the exact semblance of the figures sometimes sketches are drawn and then painted with colours.

In the villages of Man, Paltha, Sutah and Nud nearby Samba at Mansar Road, the mud thatched huts with straw roofs are well decorated with these paintings internally as well as externally. I happened to visit these places and was extremely impressed by the aesthetic approach these people possess; despite their meagre resources they give the practical shape to their aesthetic feelings. Running wavy structures, different coloured squares with borderlining, triangular bordering structures and moving serpents with different scales and hair on their body are the few examples (see the illustrations). The entrance is generally decorated with a pair of dogs or cats on either of the two sides. These dogs and cats along

with parrots are also drawn in different colours on the barn houses, corn stores etc.

(a) *Wall Paintings on Rituals* : During the ceremonies of marriage, mundan and the birth of a male baby, inner as well as outer walls are painted with shining colours of happiness and prosperity. The wall or Chowki is painted with Swastika in vermillion and rice grains. Sometimes ladies print their hands on the frame of entrance of their house with white of the powdered rice in water. Different designs are painted on the walls with a number of figures.

(b) *Wall Paintings on Diwali* : The most celebrated festival of lamps is supposed to be of supreme importance for Hindus. It is the festival equally important for children, ladies, businessmen and men of the service class. It is also called the festival of goodess Lakshmi, the goddess of riches. On this day the image of Lakshmi is worshipped. The houses are decorated and sweets are distributed to the friends and relatives. The businessmen start their transaction from this very day. They white-wash their shops, and business centres, decorate their dwellings and worship the Goddess Lakshmi. On the walls phrases and short sentences expressing a suitable sentiment are painted. These writings are always painted in red colour like vermillion. Swastika, the symbol of prosperity is drawn. The shops are lighted heavily with colourful candles. The houses are also white-washed and decorated well. The place of worship is especially decorated with all the pump and show. The walls of such places are used as canvas for drawing the figures of Ganesha, Lakshmi and writings of welcome to Lakshmi. Diwali is having a great importance for new born male children. For them the shops are decorated; on the walls the figures of fruits, vegetables, sweets, corn and utensils are drawn. It signifies the business-mindedness of a particular community who wants that their ward should be a businessman. Sometimes the figure of Goddess Lakshmi is also painted on the walls of the houses and the shops.

(c) *Nagpanchami* : Duggar is a land where Naga cult prevails with all its vitality. Almost all the religious places, Dehries, Dehras and tribal stages contain the icons of serpants. Even the water springs are having the icons of coiled snakes carved on sandy stones (see sculpture Sec. and

illustrations).

Nagas are worshipped on this land both for fulfilment of wishes and for their awesome structure and mysterious powers. Certain Dogra clans feel proud for being the descendants of Naga ancestors. Nagas are worshipped on different occasions but Nagpanchami is their main day when almost all Dogra families celebrate the day with Nag-Puja. The way of worship however, differs from family to family.

Nagpanchami is a popular festival among the Mahajan families of Jammu. They celebrate it with all festivities. The houses are washed, cleaned and the walls of rooms or kitchens are coated with cow-dung over which the figures of serpents are drawn. The number of the Nagas drawn vary from one family to another. Some families draw five Nagas others three and still others draw a scorpion and a milliped along with the figures of serpents. Some families worship only black coloured snakes while others white coloured.

Brahmin family of a particular clan worship figures of coiled serpents painted with Desi Ghee on the internal wall of the kitchen near the ovens. The ladies do this job of painting. After painting the Nagas and worshipping them, they are served with 'Khir' (rice cooked in milk), 'Pude' (fried small sweet cakes of wheat), fruits and sweets. After serving Nag Devta, Brahmins are served and then only comes the turn of family members. The families who regard Nagas as their ancestors only sprinkle milk water in the rooms.

Nagpanchami is very popular amongst the ladies who have given birth to the just son. They serve Nagas with fruits and sweets having painted five to one hundred five-Nagas with Desi Ghee, curd and milk. Some ladies serve Nagas with the wooden, brass and silver images of serpents after the fulfilment of their wishes. In certain ranges of Duggar land 'Surgal Devta' is worshipped and the day is celebrated with 'Phumani' dance.

(d) *Hoyee* : The celebrated festival of Hoyee falls on Ashtami after Karva Chouth. On this day the ladies of certain families go on fast and in the evening break the fast after serving fruits, sweets and Mathies to the male children of the family. The walls of kitchen are painted with a lady figure of Hoyee Mata by a 'Jhiri'. Some believe that figure is of

nobody but of Jhiri herself along with the figures of palanquin carriers. These figures are drawn in rich colours i.e. red, blue, yellow and purple.

The names of male family members, starting with the head of the family upto the newly born baby, are written on one side of the canvas of wall. The housewives serve raddish, sugarcane, sweets and corn to the folk artist of this figure i.e. 'Jhiri'. Afterwards the children are served with gifts, eatables and money. Every year this money is multiplied and at the time of marriage their collected amount is used to purchase the ornaments for their brides. This custom is perhaps out-dated now. The ladies break the fast after seeing the first star. The festival is significant for children who get enough sweets and money on this day.

(e) *Tulsi Puja* : As given in floor painting section :

# 7

## *Art of Calligraphy*

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Calligraphy—so called the art of beautiful writing was very popular among the royal families. Almost all the royal families sheltered the calligraphists under their umbrella. The printing was not common in olden days, however, litho printing of certain books was available. Hand-written books travelled from generations to generations. These books could not survive the parabola of time. Hence, either new books were written or old books were copied. Sometimes wooden letters were made with the help of which litho printing of the books was done. Litho printing process was a complex one as so many words of wooden type were carved and most of them did not give good impression. Moreover, all the letters so made were not in finished form; hence, the feudal lords and their families especially religious minded ladies, patronised calligraphists. A few feudal lords patronised the group of calligraphists only because feudal lords in other states did so. Very few people were devoted to this art. Certain exceptional personalities were very much after this art and others who were after preserving the old manuscripts encouraged the calligraphists on their own behalf.

*Material used :* Birchleaf, paper, black ink, different colours and pens of different strengths were the material used for this purpose.

(i) *Paper :* Paper was specially prepared for miniature paintings and calligraphy work. Sialkot was the centre of its industry. Paper was imported from Sialkot into different Dogra states. The paper was of several types. A particular

paper was used for a particular purpose. Generally for bold writing lustrous paper of cream colour was used. Sometimes shining white paper was also used for this purpose. The sheets of paper were cut into required measurements and lines in a light shade were drawn on each of them. In this way canvas for the writing was set ready. This was the job of pupils, companions or other persons assisting the calligraphists.

Birchleaves were seldom used as the process of smoothening them was a hard and hazardous. The use of such leaves was very much prevalent hundreds of years ago when paper was not available.

(ii) *Ink* : Generally almond nuts were burnt and treated chemically with organic gums to get lustrous black ink. Lampsoot and lamp black were also treated in the same way. The ink so got after chemical analysis was having lasting effects. The writings of hundreds of years are still fresh as if they have been written a few days back. Calligraphists used black ink for its better exposure and easy availability.

(iii) *Colours* : Most of the scriptures, thus written, contain a number of figures and paintings too. The writing of the book would start with vermillion coloured Swastika or the figure of Ganpati. With the description and details of writings on particular subject, paintings were also painted. These paintings were very similar to those of miniature paintings but were not so fine. Generally primary colours like red, yellow and blue were used. These colours were prepared from organic and inorganic sources by the artists themselves or acquired from other sources. The colours were prepared according to the details given in folk painting section.

(iv) *Pen Used* : It was quite an improvised tool of an artist. It depended upon the choice of calligraphist to chisel out the pen for calligraphy. The size of the tip used was to correspond with the nature of the job. Generally these pens were made out of bamboo and 'Kana' shrubs. It was called 'Kani' but to most sophisticated and learned people it was named as 'Kalam' or 'Lekhani' (which writes). Bamboo pieces and Kana were cut into required size and the tip made pointed with the help of a knife. Again the pointed tip was cut tangently so as to keep pace with the nature of job.

The other side of the Kana must have a knot. Actually the pieces of Kana were cut from node to node i.e. each Kani was an internode the one side of which was chiselled afterwards. A calligraphist box contained a number of such pens of various strengths. Lately metallic nibs were used with nib holders. They were purchased from market.

*Technique* : The calligraphy or beautiful writing was the product of regular practice and keen observation. Pupils worked upon wooden pieces brushed with red clay and dried it. The rough surface was smoothed by rags and practice started. The practice of writing by a pupil went for years together and when acquainted fully with the nature of the job and possessed enough experience, an assignment of less importance was given to him. This technique of training a young student to improve one's handwriting was very much prevalent in 'Madrasas'; even lately this practice was there in schools. I myself have tried on these 'Takhties' for three years together. Paper was not in plenty in the market; moreover, it was too costly for the common masses. Note books were given to the students only after passing that stage.

The trainees were examined at intervals by the Chief Calligraphists or even by the members of royal family. If any trainee satisfied them, the assignment of assisting the Chief Calligraphists was given. Sometimes direct independent assignments were also entrusted to sincere and hardworking trainees. A Calligraphist possessed a number of such pupils. Actually schools of calligraphy were established. One such school existed virtually in Sanskrit library of Raghunath temple, Jammu in the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. During his tenure a number of scriptures were rewritten, copied and supplied to so many religious places and the centres of studies.

With the fast running of printing presses this art vanished slowly and slowly. Calligraphy among the Urdu script writers is still prevalent but only at the professional level because type of Urdu script is not readily available. Printing with Urdu type is a bit costlier affair than the litho printing after preparing a draft on a glazed paper used by Katibs.

Manuscripts in beautiful writing on Birch leaves and paper books are readily available in museums. I possess twelve

such books which belonged to the court of Ramkot. These books pertain to different Puranic writings, Arti, Ganesh Puja, written in Sanskrit but without any borderlining or coloured figures.

In Dogra Art Gallery Jammu, there is a book having calligraphic leaves with figures of the deities. There is also a book of birch leaves containing beautiful writings.

Some Calligraphists specialised their job to such an extent that they could write Shalokas of Geeta and Vedic hymns on ivory pieces, rice grains and red wax. I have seen a small piece of ivory with a number of Shalokas. The ivory piece is lying with my friend. This art is dwindling day by day, perhaps, in the time to come people would know this art only through books. There is need of appreciation of this art to help the artists and encourage them.

# 8

## *Needle Work/Embroidery/Crochet Work/Knitting*

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Embroidery and Phulkari work of Shivaliks is world famous. Womenfolk is devoted to this folk art. Girls by instinct imitate their elder counterparts in knitting needle work and ornamentation of the cloth pieces. Inter-weaving the threads of different sorts with small needles into multifarious designs from the very childhood is the homely training they get from their elder sisters, mothers and other elderly ladies. In their teenage they are virtually trained to make ornamental garments for their dowry. They knit heavy woollen clothes like sweaters with intricate designs, embroider the sarees with golden and silken threads of different colours into several beautiful designs of borderlining, as well as floral and figurative structures. They interlace the coloured beads, twist the threads into definite patterns braiding and plaiting the threads to form the multitudes and variegated designs.

Kashmiri needle work, Dogri embroidery and Punjabi knitting are known to be artistically superb. Chamba, Basohli and Jammu Rumaals (handkerchiefs), embroidered Choulies and bed sheets are still very popular among the common masses. The embroidery of Chamba is lovely, attractive and beautiful. The different postures, gestures and facial expressions of human beings on these objects are the examples of "live" embroidery.

*Pahari Rumaals* : The best model of hilly needle work is the embroidered handkerchiefs. Chamba Rumaals were world

famous for their fine needle work. From the olden times the Rumaals have been used as headgear by ladies of hilly ranges of Jammu, Chamba and Kangra. Shining coloured Rumaals can be seen fastened around the head or neck. These Rumaals are simple having very light or no needle work on them. Afterwards these Rumaals were used as token of gifts. Such Rumaals were richly embroidered with golden, silken and cotton threads of different colours. The tradition of embroidering the square cloth pieces of light colour was not limited to Chamba only but like Pahari paintings it spread throughout the hilly tracts and kingdoms of Basohli, Bilaspur, Jammu, Kullu, Kangra, Mandi and Mankot. Surely Chamba is not the originator of these embroidered Rumaals. Like Pahari Kalam the Basohli Rumaals are the oldest. This is another thing that now the tradition is not prevalent in Basohli as in Chamba. If we say that this tradition has crossed the Ravi and has flourished in the region of Chamba after the fall of Basohli state it will not be an exaggeration. A Rumaal of Chamba is lying in the South Cassington Museum. It is believed that the Rumaal belonged to Basohli which was taken to Chamba along with precious articles of loot by Raja Raj Singh, the king of Chamba in 1782 A.D. Another Rumaal is lying in the museum of Baroda which is supposed to be superb among the artistic designing in embroidery.<sup>11</sup>

These Pahari Rumaals are embroidered over the square pieces of light coloured cloth of different measurements. Sometimes other forms of the Rumaals are also used. This art can be traced to the origin of wall paintings and miniatures. The field of this art, however, remained in the vicinity of women-folk only. The subject of embroidery was generally Phulkari i.e. to embroider flowers, twiners with leaves and flowers. Some of the beautiful Rumaals contained the more beautiful and popular subjects like Raas Leela, Krishan-Leela etc.

*Technique :* The more definite artistic Rumaals were prepared out of the light silk or superior cotton cloth pieces. Though, some rough cloth cut piece Rumaals were also in use and they were common among the common folk yet the superior cloth pieces were found to be more richly embroidered.

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11. Pahari Chitrakala by Kashori Lal Vaidya & Om Handa, p. 151.

Generally double stitching was done so as to finish the Rumaal on both sides. The figures so embroidered were border-lined by golden thread if material used for embroidering the figures was another thread. The threads available were generally white in colour. They were coloured at home. The primary colours were prepared from organic matters like yellow from Acacia flowers, black from lamp soot, saffron from saffron flowers, red from Basuti etc. The secondary colours were prepared by mixing the primary colours in proper ratio. Saffron colour was also got by mixing the primary colours.

These Rumaals are still in use in certain ranges of Himachal. During 'Shagun' ceremony, token of gifts like dry fruits, sweets etc. placed in the baskets are covered with the designed Rumaals. They are also given as a gift along with the dowry ; the tradition is still prevalent.

Such two specimens of Pahari Rumaals of Jammu region displayed in the Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu. First Rumaal is of red silken cloth cut into square of nine inches into nine inches measurement. The whole Rumaal is divided by thread work into four big squares. Each square is again divided into four thus making total sixteen squares. Each square contains a geometrically pointed petaloid flower embroidered with threads of gold, blue and green colours. Border is again designed.

There is another Rumaal made out of light yellow silken cloth having  $3' \times 3'$  measurement. The Rumaal is beautifully embroidered by squarely bordering runners and twiners having green leaves alternately braided paused by red petaloid flowers having four red petals each. Second border is yellow in colour in lining form. Third is purple again in the form of lining. In each of the four corners geometrically designed  $1/4$ th of a flower is embroidered with variegated colours, having red petals of yellow and green shade. The centre of each such flower occupies a yellow round pith-like structure. Each corner has a pair of parrots sitting opposite to each other. Each parrot has a green body and red beak and wings. In the centre of Rumaal there is a big flower having eight petals of red colour with purple shade. Each red petal is intercepted by a green sepal. There are four saphire-coloured beads stitched one in each direction. The

centre of the flower has yellow and green circles. This central flower is surrounded by double borderlining of yellow silken thread having twinner inside running circularly with alternate green leaves and purple flowers.

*Ornamental Choulies* : Like Pahari Rumaal Pahari Choulies are very popular among the masses. The rich decoration of such Choulies (blouses) comes from the inherited art of making bodice. Often these Choulies were backless but had half sleeves. These open neck garments had cups to be fitted on the breasts. These cups were richly decorated with needle work of fine taste. Sometimes these blouses were ornamented with pendants of cut glass stitched to give lustre to the blouse. The blouses were also ornamented with beads of different colours, gold thread—Tilla, pieces of mica and mirrors. Heavily braided and ornamented Choulies are still preserved in several museums of the country.

Although these blouses were backless but the bodice part of the ornamental garments was fastened at the back with the help of small strings ; it would run upto waist and had half sleeves. This is something astonishing as among the ladies of these areas, who generally lead a simple life, the ornamented backless blouses were significantly in vogue. Though sex was never a taboo in the hills, yet, the exhibition of any part of the body was never encouraged. One can easily infer that the use of these Choulies might have been limited to the females of the royalty. But in Rajput royal families too it was not possible for the ladies to put on these garments out of doors. Perhaps these blouses were meant for giving gifts and for decoration purposes with a limited use to satisfy one's hunger for artistic wearing in isolation or in the company of some one from whom they wanted appreciation of their beauty.

The stitching of these garments was a bit complicated process as compared to Rumaals. Rumaals could have been got from any cloth piece left uncared for or unused. But for Choulies, special cloth pieces were needed. They used to be made of silken cloth pieces of different colours richly embroidered with myriad designs.

A number of such Choulies are exhibited in the Dogra Art Gallery, Gandhi Bhawan, Jammu. Three of which are beautifully decorated.

- (i) It is a finely embroidered backless half sleeved Chouli cut out of fine silken superior cloth piece. There are two big flowers with 15 petals embroidered with Tilla thread. Each covers the breast cup. Inside each big flower there are small flowers having eight petals each. The big flowers are embroidered with green and red border from inside. While inner flowers have red bordering from inside and green pith occupies the high place of nipples. On the waist portion there is again a big flower having sixteen petals. This lonely flower is bordered by green, red and blue lines from inside. Again there is a small flower inside these borders of different colours. From this flower emerged four budding flowers on four directions with a small twig each. There are two spindles embroidered on left and right side of flower. The spindle on left side is in Tilla while that on right side is embroidered with red silken thread.
- (ii) Second blouse is again backless, having red coloured sleeves of silken cloth embroidered with six borderlings plaited in wavy structures of different colours. The cups of this blouse are conical in structure and divided into three quadrangular cells having blue base. Each is embroidered rewith flower designs.
- (iii) Third blouse is again a backless one. It is richly decorated with the style of No. I blouse; sleeves are plain while cups are embroidered with same style. The back is covered by red thread from neck side and yellow thick cotton thread bordering the cups from waist side.

*Bed Sheets and Covers* : In addition to the above garments the ladies are very fond of embroidered bed-covers and sheets. The cloth piece of the required size is purchased from the market and got stamped with the sketch of different designs. These are then embroidered by the ladies with needle work of coloured threads. The material of thread ranges from rough cotton to silken one of various dimensions. This work is done to keep pace with the items to be prepared for the dowry. Rarely Tilla is used now ; instead golden coloured silk thread has taken the place of gold thread. These sheets are embroidered

in the corners with lofty designs, on the peripheries, with runners and twiners having alternate flowers, leaves and buds. Centrally embroidered flowers of different shining colours are the source of attraction. These covers and sheets are braided with single stitching. However, in special cases double stitching is also done when the sheets are to be used from both the sides. Now Dasooti, a cotton cloth loosely woven, is very popular for needle work. It does not need any pre-stamping of designs. Only the number of warp and woof threads are counted and needled according to the nature of designs. Beautiful sceneries, huts, figures of men, women, animals, plants, running streams, bridges, flying birds, trees, stair-cases, temples, mosques etc. are needled with the acumen-ship of an artist. Such beautifully designed and embroidered pieces when seen from a distance, spell bound the on-looker for the brilliance of their colours and the beauty of the scenes done on them.

In olden days too, such folk art of needle work on sheets and covers was very much prevalent. A number of such pieces with lofty designs are preserved in the Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu. A bed sheet cut out of red cotton cloth is embroidered richly with green, yellow and white threads. The designs are the geometrical pointed flowers. Another is a richly decorated heavy bed sheet designed with needle work of red, blue, green and yellow coloured floral forms. It is bordered with runners and twiners having green leaves and small flowers.

*Cushions, Mantel Pieces, Small Covers etc.:* Generally Dasooti is used for sewing and decorating these pieces. Floral designs, names, sceneries, figures etc. are needled in the same style as in bed sheets. Coloured threads are used. Cushions are generally embroidered with a single big flower surrounded by a twinner with leaves and small flowers in a complete circle. Sometimes, four flowers with a central pith is embroidered with richly coloured threads over light coloured Dasooti.

*Foot Mats, Pendant Bags:* Housewives know how to use rags even for useful purposes. The gunny bags, jute bags of small size are needled with red, blue and yellow coarse threads on the borders with simple border designs. The

central place is decorated with a single flower. In the same way shoulder bags are made out of jute, cotton and handloom cloth pieces decorated with different designs. Sometimes, coloured rags or spared cloth pieces are cut, designed and needled to figure a human face, a doll with two pony tails. The black cloth piece or thick threads of black colour are used for hair and eyes while red cloth piece or threads for lips, light colour threads for other parts of the body. The people generally use woollen threads if they fall short of the coarse cotton one. Bags are also cut out of Dasooti and braided with thread into different designs.

*Crochet Work* : To watch lady interlacing the threads, plaiting into wavy network with sinuous movements of her hands is really a charm. Looping, knotting and lacing thread into myriad designs is not less artistic than that of fine art of any nature. They need a hooked needle, thread and the technique of the fingers. Crocheting needs a hard practice and immitation. Unlike the needling and embroidery, it does not need concentration when there is a simple design. A lady, like knitting, can go on crocheting while talking and watching. But while weaving a definite design one has to be very much particular and watchful. Of course one can talk but it becomes obviously impossible to form a design without concentrating over the work. Generally the right hand does the work of weaving with a hooked needle called crochet moving in different directions where as thread is bound around the pointing finger of left hand which goes on loosing the thread needed for. At intervals left hand finger is again filled with rims of the thread. The desired threads rest on the central finger of left hand.

Lace is crocheted for several purposes say, it is a multi-purpose structure used for adding length to the shirt, chamize, petty coats, skirts, under-skirts even to the short sleeves. The thread used for laces is selected according to the nature and colour of the garment to which the lace is to be stitched. It is not only used to enlarge the size of garments but also to beautify handkerchiefs, mantle pieces and covers of radio sets, T.V. sets, mirrors etc.

Apart from the lace lining, beautiful covers, mantle pieces, mirror covers, book shelf covers and covers of radio and

T.V. sets are crocheted exclusively out of silken, cotton or woollen threads. Now-a-days nylon fibres are also used for this purpose. The more handy bags are woven with nylon fibres. The hook needles used for these purposes are of different numbers.

*Designs* : It is almost impossible to count the designs made by crochet work. I have seen hundreds of designs made by ladies on these pretty needles. I possess a number of crocheted mantle pieces exclusively made out of flowers of different sizes of thread stitched together not with an ordinary needle but by crochet itself. There are two round crochet pieces woven divergently converging in the centre. The circles of triangular structures go on expanding towards the periphery making the piece transparent. The whole circle is divided into four cells with four streaks running from centre to the rings. There is another master piece having a large flower of six pointed geometrical petals. At the rim a round streak is there making divergent streaks. Here two petals again on either side of each streak are crocheted. At the extreme periphery a fine net work is woven which ends in threaded pendants. Fourth piece is also interwoven with flowers and family names are crocheted on this piece. It is braided with a bordering lace of exquisite design.

*Household Articles* : Household articles like caps, Khalitidi (a small cloth bag meant for 'Kaajal' (eye ointment), cushions, cloth fans and other articles of daily use were prepared by the ladies in their house without putting any extra burden on the budget. They are still in vogue.

*Caps* : These were prepared out of unused white pieces of cloth. Sometimes coloured pieces were also stitched to form designed caps of multishades. Generally, such rounded caps were put on by the children.

*Khalitidi* : The old ladies used to needle double lining small bags to keep 'Kaajal' inside. These double lined small bags were called Khalitidi. They were having decorated outer cloth piece where as that of inner side was a rough piece. The outer rims of their bags were decorated with silver ribbons.

Along with these articles *Cushions* were also prepared out of the unused or sometimes with uncared cloth pieces. These cushions were filled in with cotton, rags and coconut fibres.

The tradition of making cushions is still very much popular among the girls preparing their dowry. Three pairs of cushions are generally prepared. Their coverings are carved with Fulkari and sometimes double set of such covers are given during marriage ceremony.

Cushions are used for sitting, support as well as for decoration purposes.

*Dolls* : The ladies were very fond of making beautiful dolls out of rags. A girlish figure was made out of rags. The face, eyes, lips, nose etc. were needled with different coloured threads, hair with black thread, lips with a red one and eye balls with fly threads. Nose was made by stitching a hard-paper of small size having a fold in a triangular structure. The ponytails were made out of the black threads. Now-a-days the faces, busts and also full body of a doll is available in the market. You have to simply dress up the caricature.

## *Miscellaneous*

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**Straw-work :** Dry wheat tubular straws popularly known as 'Narh' among Duggar ladies were used for preparing fans. The straws of same size were cut and sewed with needle. Generally two linings of Narh were horizontally and vertically arranged. These straws then were needled with a bordering circles of coloured cloth. One side of the square was bound again with needled threads. These decorated fans were used for giving and taking gifts. During summer, rare families used these fans for fanning purposes also. The handles so made were covered with mobile handy tubelets which were easy to move frequently. These tubelets were cut out of small hollow bamboos.

**Jute-Dolls :** These are very popular now. The faces of these dolls are made out of hard paper while hair and head are made out of jute fibres.

**Straw Sceneries :** These are drawn on the dark grey or black coloured cloth pieces. These pieces are pasted on hardboard and caricatures with pencil are drawn. These caricatures range from figurative structure to the scenic beauty. Afterwards with the help of fevicol or gum, straw-pieces are jointed together arranging in their scenic views make the sceneries alive.

**Bamboo Work :** It is very popular among the Dogras. Baskets, small bags, pataries, table-lamps, candle stands, chandlers (a sort of open basket), photoframes, dateframes, bookshelves, stands for keeping the articles of daily use are made out of straws wended from bamboo pieces.

*Games like ludo, choupad etc.* : These were also made out of unused cloth-pieces with coloured squares of cloth piece stitched over. I have seen a chess board beautifully designed with the coloured squares and silver ribbon over hard-board. But this chess board is seldom used for playing purposes.

In Dogra Art Gallery a 'Gian Choupad' (Intellectuals' game) is preserved. It belonged to the reign of Maharaja Gulabsingh of Jammu & Kashmir. It was written by Mahesh Pandit about 129 years ago. It shows the path of salvation.

The game Gian Choupad is written on a square cloth piece of  $2'-6'' \times 2'-6''$  measurement with 361 squares,  $19 \times 19$ —horizontally and vertically crossing each other. The whole game is embroidered on a light coloured silken cloth piece with a lining of green thread. About thirty snakes are needled symbolising the evil deeds, lusts, wants and desires which cause the down-fall. There are also twenty one ladders which signify the progress and prosperity. The ladders are needled with red-coloured thread. Each square depicts an emotion, deed or feeling; for instance, 1st square depicts well begining, fourth information, seventh sadness, 53rd love, 127th cleverness, 137th happiness. On the right side, 144th symbolises sleep, 128th belief, 142nd trust, 160th well doings. Ultimate goals are the three lokas, Shiv Loka, Vishnu Loka and Brahma Loka. Only  $18 \times 18$  squares of either side are numbered while the central line of 19 squares represent 19 lokas starting from Patala ending to Sidhloka—the loka of saints and yogies.

*Chandliers* : During the festival of Diwali beautiful structures are made of bamboo sticks and paperwork. The multi-angular cubic structures are made with the help of bamboo sticks bound together from end to end and centre to centre. Their frameworks are afterwards covered with colourful paper. These huge structures are called 'Phanoos' (Chandliers). They are hung in the roofs, sometimes with light bulbs inside. The room is also decorated with colourful paperwork and coloured paper flowers on that day.

*Chhajja* : Makar Sakranti—the festival of 'Lohri'—is of great importance for Dogras. It falls in the 2nd week of January, generally 12th of January every year. The boys in groups visit houses of families who celebrate the festival due to happy occasion, say a new born child or new marriage. The boys

prepare the replicas of dancing peacock—a beautiful structure erected over bamboo pieces ornamented with heavy decoration of coloured paper-work and powdered silver ribbons. These structures are called 'Chhajja'. Though the tradition of making chhajja is outdated now yet small children get the triangular form of it readymade from the market or prepare themselves. But celebration form of the festival is still there. In the hilly areas a structure of a deer is still erected. It is called 'Hirna'. The people go around the village houses with this structure all along rejoicing and dancing and late in the evening they enjoy sumptuous dinner.

*Patangi* : During Holi celebrations the people used to decorate themselves with makeup of different headgears. These structures were made out of coloured paper and silver ribbons. People used to dance after wearing this head-gear. This was known as 'Patangi'.

*Kumkume* : During the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh red wax was used for making kumkume. It was metted over red hot coal and swollen into balloon forms with the help of metallic tubes through which air was passed. These balloon type structures were filled with red colour and thrown over each other during Holi festival—*i.e.* the festival of colours. This practice is no longer followed as now rubber balloons are easily available at cheaper rates. Kumkume word is derived from Kumkum or red colour. Since red liquid-colour was used in the preparation of these quaint structures, they assured the names of Kumkume.

## |FOLK PAINTING—ART OF THE SHIVALIKS

Among various means of expression, folk art has impressed and influenced the common masses most since centuries. In real sense the folk art depicts the essence of the people's emotions, feelings, thoughts, and above all the culture of the age.

Folk painting, the first medium of man's expression, came into light through the cave-paintings, terracotta, wall paintings etc. from the stone period to the date. Among different schools of folk paintings of the Northern belt, Pahari folk art, Rajasthani folk Art and Haryanvi folk art along with the

Punjabi touch reign supreme. In the recent excavations on the bank of Chenab in Akhnoor several terracotta evidences of the existence of folk art of long past came into light ; many terracotta busts and pottery pieces were discovered. The pottery work and painting on that is very popular among the masses even now. The paintings on the walls of mud houses in rural area are very popular. These are called 'Chittarna'. During the celebrations like marriages, mundan ceremony and at the time of construction of new houses the mud thatched houses are brushed with cow-dung and afterwards decorated with paintings done with white liquid after mixing 'parola' with water. The paintings drawn are varied in form i.e. from figure art to scenic view.

At the time of marriages, the floor paintings of the 'Mandapas' or ritual places are done with turmeric, gulal and Parola. At the time of reception of marriage party as well as the first entrance of the bride in the house, the decorations are given due attention. Coloured drawings of flowers and geometrical designs are the source of attraction.

The Pahari folk art can be traced from the fine paintings of Kulu, Kangra, Basohli and Jammu miniatures. The remains of old buildings, palaces and temples communicate the folk expression. This passion for decoration and beauty still prevails among the rural folk.

In Haryana, the folk painting art can be traced from the Harappa period. Excavations recently done at Banawali at Daultabad show the results. The evidences collected from the terracotta as well as the baskets so excavated tell the story of Haryana folk art of the old times. The pottery utensils possess a number of paintings the style of which in Haryana is known as 'Chittana'. It is evident from these paintings that in Haryana folk painting had importance from remote times. The old art has survived the parabola of time and people still paint the walls, doorways, Mandapas and Musoleums.

The style of folk painting in Haryana can be classified into two separate units. The first is when the canvas is earth surface, walls or pottery ; the style is named as 'Mandana'. The old Mandana style painting is still found in the form of pottery excavated at Daultabad. The fine painting work of small twinnings can still be traced to the old ethics of Mandana style

of folk painting. Sometimes in the framework of twiners figures like Hanumana, Swastika and other ceremonial images are painted. These symbols reveal the religious beliefs of the people of Haryana. Another aspect of 'Mandana' style of folk painting is a modern one. Now people instead of using cowdung or red clay use the red burnt dust of bricks with lime powder. The second style of folk painting is 'Kadana, i.e. embroidery. Its canvas is always a cloth piece on which different figures and symbols are embroidered with coloured thread. It is popular even now-a-days. The knowledge of this art is considered as essential for a bride. In Haryana generally 'Lehangaaas', 'Orhanees' etc. are embroidered by the bride before marriage. God & Goddesses form the major theme in the paintings in the Northern belt of Shivaliks. The Vishnu cult of Bhagti Andolan has greatly influenced the folk art. That is the reason why the walls of old buildings, temples, choupals, forts etc. are painted with the romantic scenes from the love stories of Lord Krishna.





A Dogra warrior riding on a horse. The horse is covered with metal mask and armoury. (Water Spring Panchary).



else of chariot of Sankrityanta (Panchay).



The sun god with a lotus in right hand and a Kalash in left hand and a lady figure standing by its left side. (Meer-Near Panchay)



Beautifully chiselled scaled serpent worshipped by the people of Meer locality as 'Akharh Devta' (near Panchay).



The half relief sculpture of Sun Chakra and a coiled serpent (water spring, Neer Meer).



Papnashi Baan. Sudh Mahadev, Chinaini



A slab of 3' x 2.5' containing the figures of horse riders, a beauty sitting in a palanquin and palanquin carriers (Water spring, Panchary).



Erosioned spring stones (near Meer).



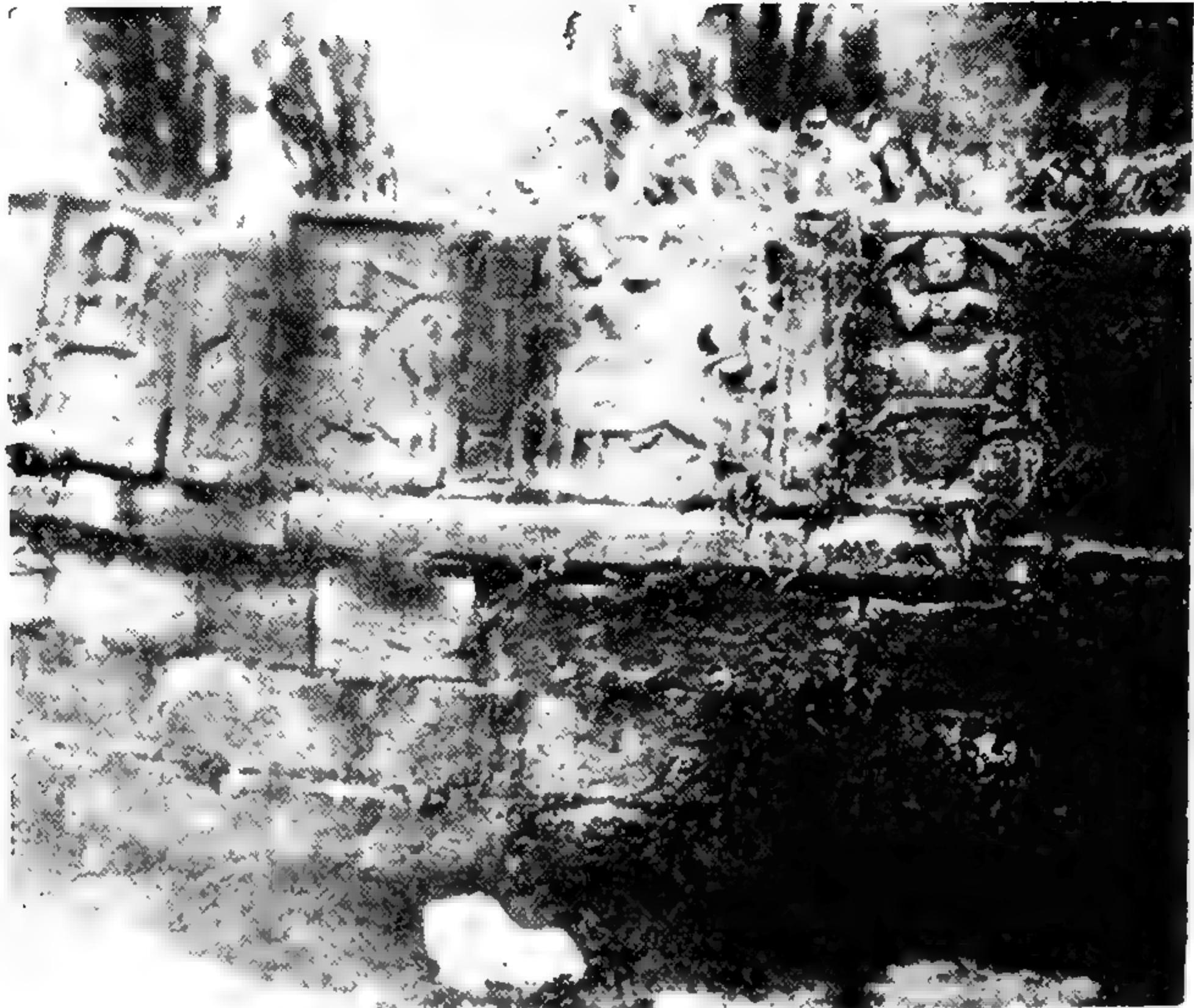
Khajurao (village ples - Udhampur Tehsil).



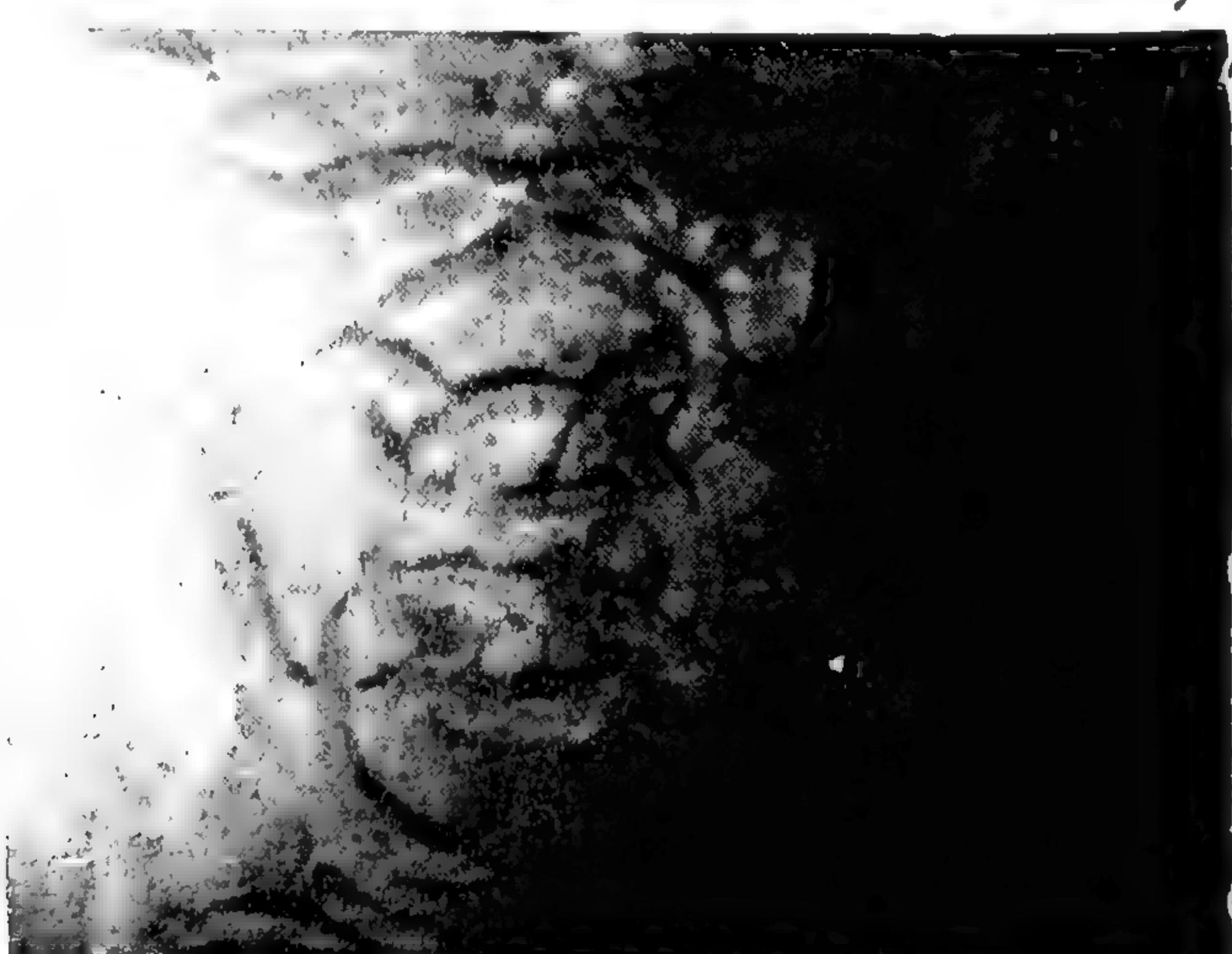
Lion head for water of a spring (Panchari).



The chiselled stone with a figure of palanquime and ladies sitting in, mermaids etc. (Jib).



A number of half-reliefs chiselled out of sandy slabs of  $1' \times 6'$  measurement. Most of them are the images of palanquins with beauties sitting in and horse riders. They are intercepted by citrus plants. (a water spring near Meer on the high cliffs).





Terracotta design found in Ambran (Akhnoor) courtesy Chandigarh Museum



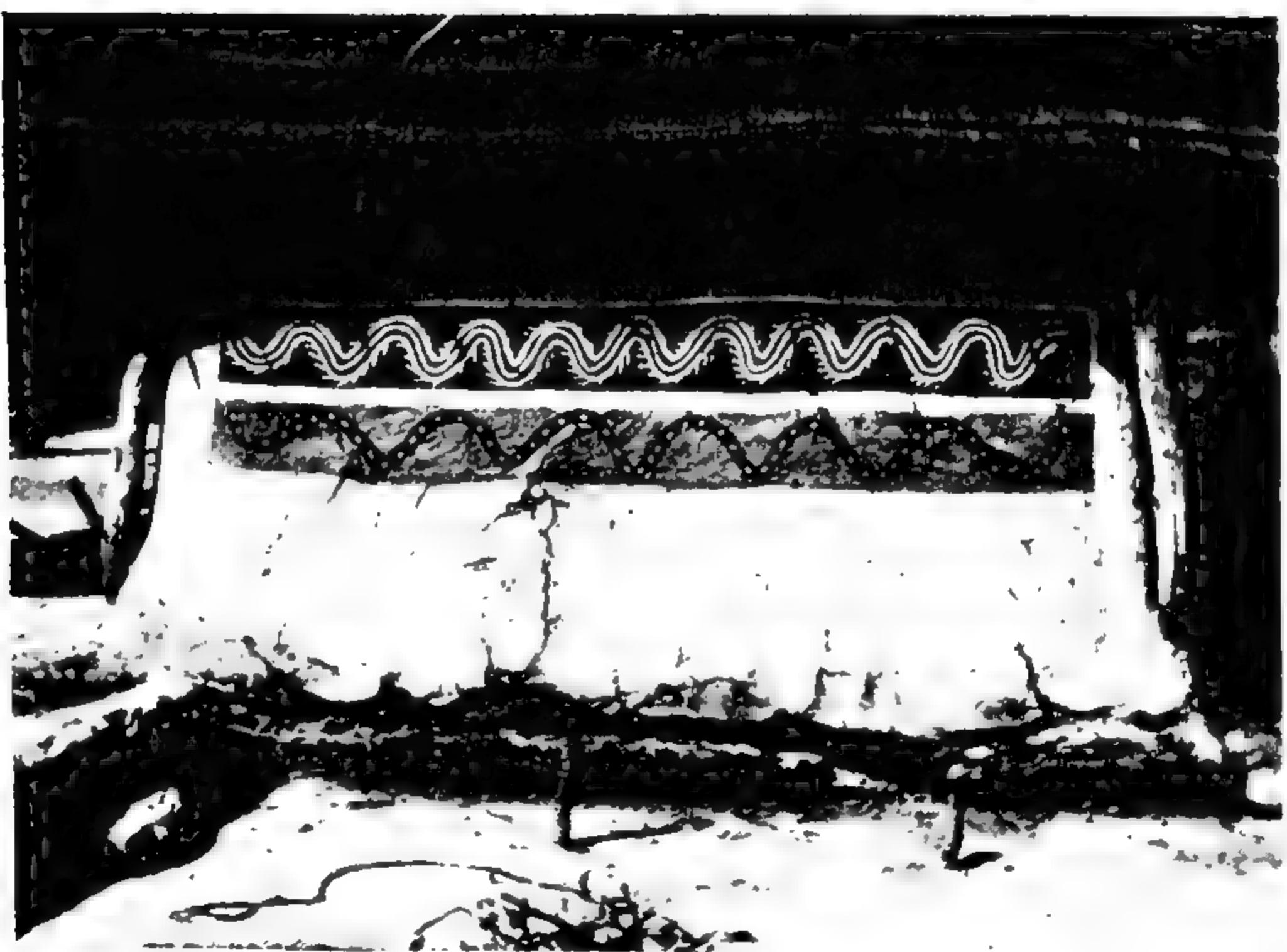
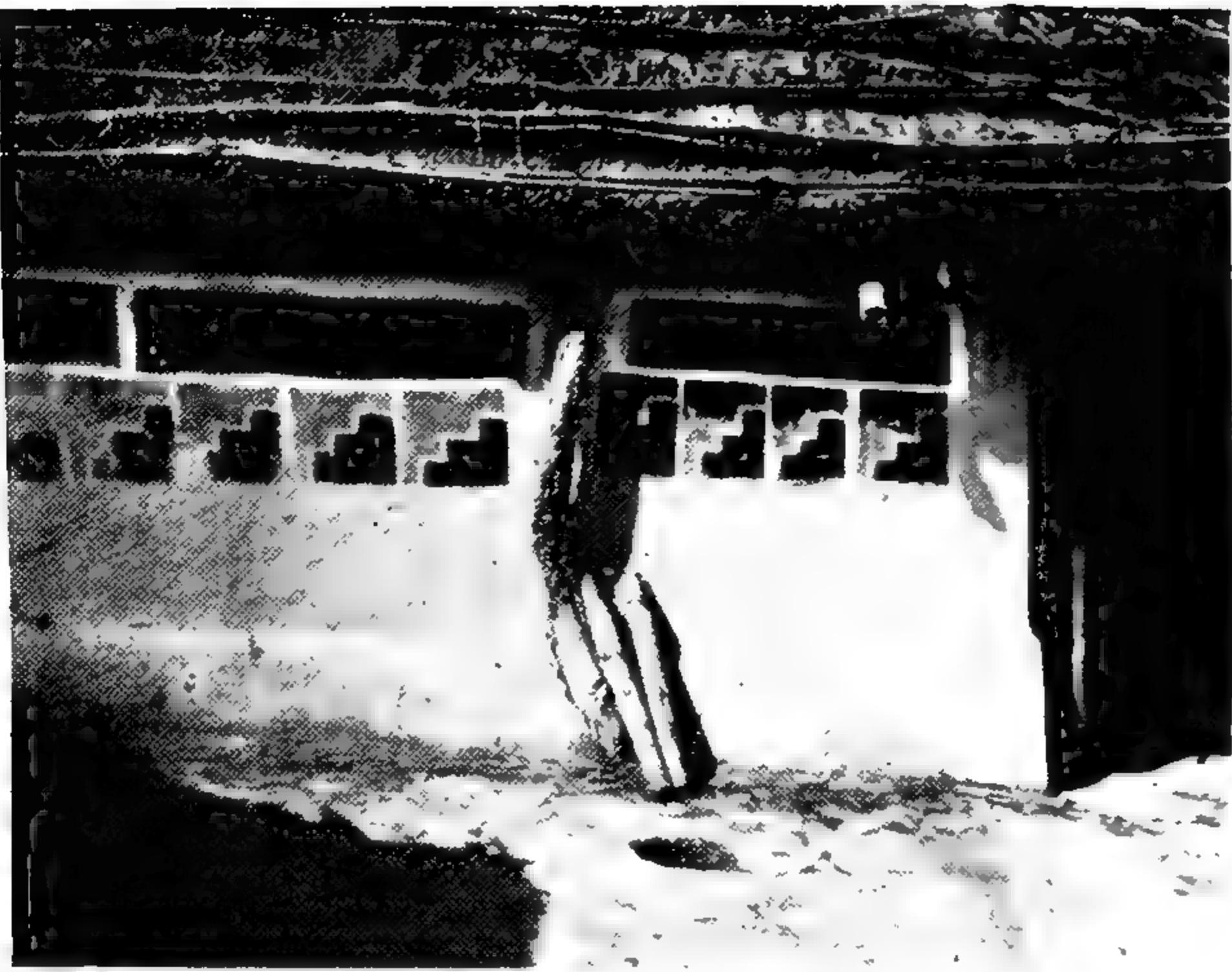
Terracotta head of a lady. Greek style found in Ambran (Akhnoor)  
Presented by Mr. S. S. Chandigarh Museum



Kartik on Peacock-woodwork carving (Courtesy Simla museum)



on table top with engravings filled in brass and ivory. The  
cabinets are setted with fine intricate wood work. They can be  
(Ramkot palace).



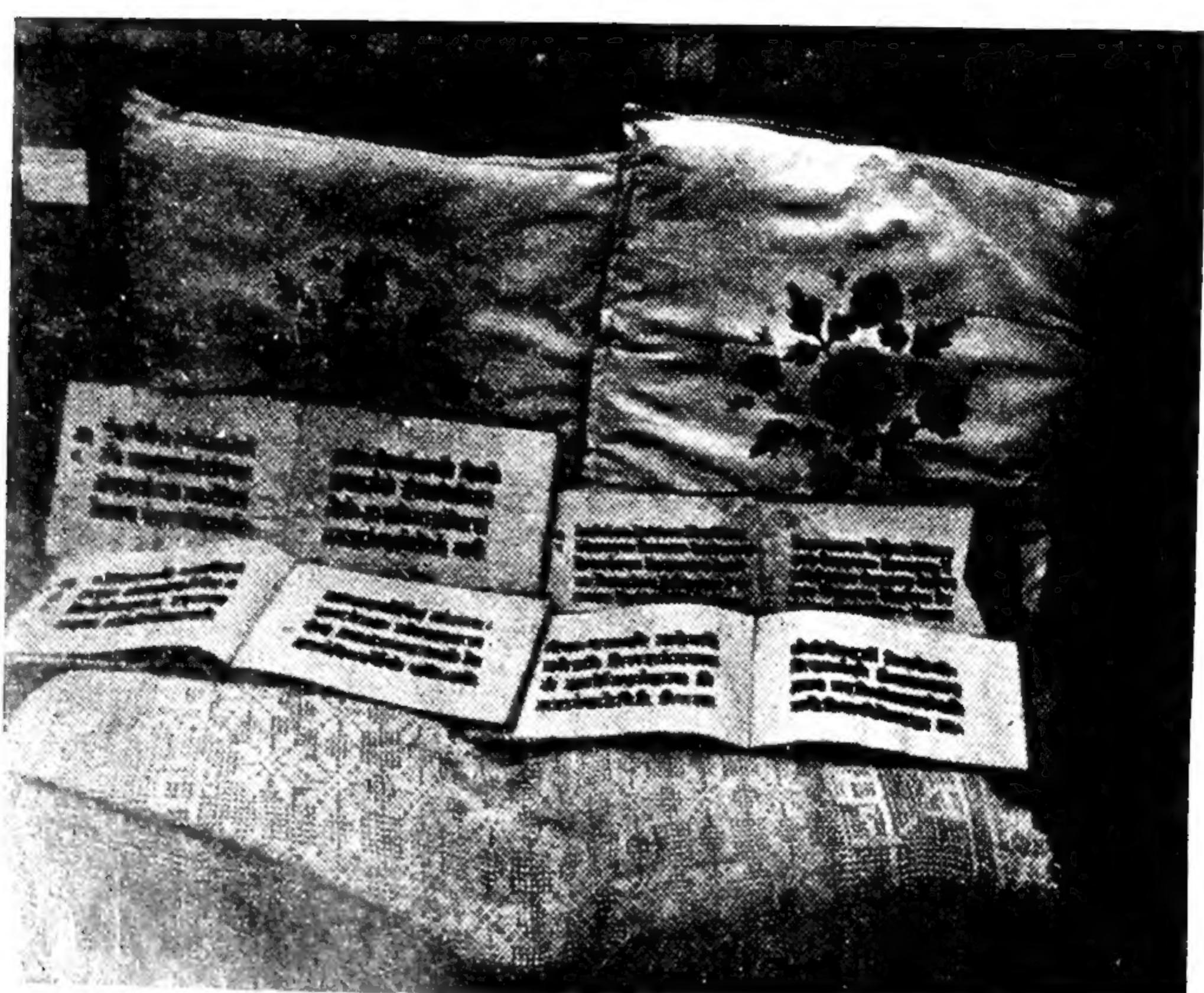
Folk paintings on the outer walls of mud thatched hut (Mansar, Jammu).



Folk painting on the outer wall of the hut of headman of Paltha in Mansar Samba road.



Crochet work of different designs (Kesra Devi, Jammu).



Old written scriptures (author)



